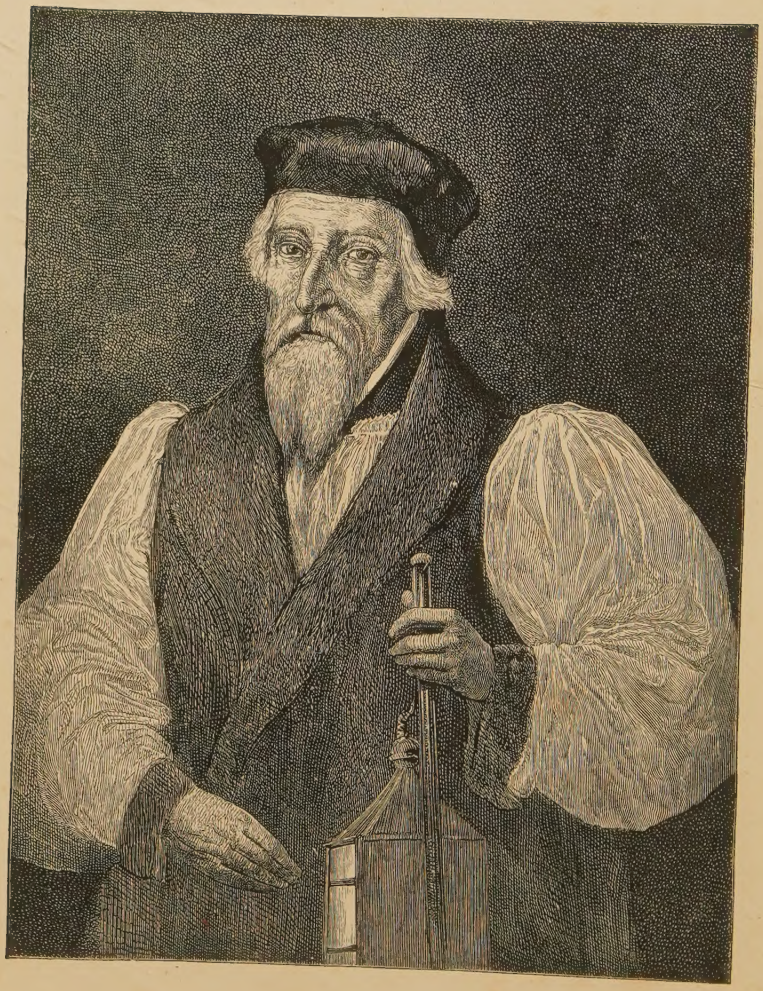

HUGH LATIMER.

HUGH LATIMER:

A BIOGRAPHY.

BY THE

REV. R. DEMAUS, M.A.

LONDON:

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,

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"Commendo vobis veterannm illum Christi et nostræ gentis Anglicanæ verum Apostolum Hugonem Latimerum."—*Ridley.*

"Did there ever any man flourish, I say not in England only, but in any nation in the world, after the Apostles, who preached the Gospel more sincerely, purely and honestly, than Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester?"—*Sir Richard Morison.*

TO

His Grace

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL,

Lord Archbishop of Canterbury,

WHO HAS BEEN JUDGED NOT UNWORTHY

TO OCCUPY THE SEES ONCE HELD BY

RIDLEY AND CRANMER;

THIS LIFE OF

"STOUT HUGH LATIMER,"

WHO WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THESE PRELATES IN

THEIR PIOUS LABOURS

AND THEIR GLORIOUS DEATH,

IS BY PERMISSION

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.

46982

PREFACE.

A LIFE of Latimer worthy of his position in English history and of his distinguished reputation, has long been a desideratum in our literature. Biographical notices of him, indeed, are not wanting; but these, always meagre, and usually inaccurate, are nothing worthy of the man who exercised so important an influence in promoting the English Reformation, and whom his countrymen have always admired as one of the best and noblest Christian heroes that England has produced. Such a life, therefore, seemed entitled to be set forth at large, both as a fitting tribute to his fame and his high character, and as an interesting portion of the history of our country during the momentous struggle for the Reformation of religion.

The present biographer hopes that in attempting this task he has not been enticed, by his long-cherished admiration of Latimer, into an undertaking altogether beyond

his strength. He has at all events sedulously availed himself of such materials for his work as were within his reach. His aim has been, if possible, to look at Latimer as his contemporaries saw him; and, setting aside modern fanciful portraits, to reproduce, as far as may be, the very authentic image of the man as he spoke, and acted, and suffered, three centuries ago. Modern authorities, therefore, friendly or unfriendly, have been very little consulted; the narrative has been compiled almost exclusively, in its framework, and in its details, from contemporary documents. Latimer's published writings are rich in autobiographical allusions; a considerable number of his letters have been preserved among the *Chapter House Papers* in the State Paper Office; in the same invaluable repository, and among the MSS. in the British Museum, many documents have been found which throw much light upon his career; and the works of his contemporaries, especially of his great associates, Ridley and Cranmer, contain frequent references to one who for many years played so important a part in the transactions of the time.

From all these sources the author has gleaned what seemed best adapted to his purpose; he has used his best endeavours to arrange in consistent chronological order the oft-times confused and contradictory materials; what was obscure he has attempted to elucidate; what was manifestly wrong he has corrected; and with such

skill and patience as he is master of, he has combined in one clear harmonious whole the facts and illustrations collected with no small labour from many scattered fields. He has endeavoured, notwithstanding his admiration of Latimer, to observe that impartiality which is due to truth; he has written, not as a panegyrist, but as a biographer; and has neither blindly praised all Latimer's conduct, nor wittingly suppressed any of his faults. And yet, to speak the truth, every honest biography of Latimer must be, more or less, a panegyric; for what language but that of praise can be suitably employed in writing of one who, in times of unwonted danger and difficulty, spent a busy life and died a brave death, with scarce a single imputation upon his honesty and courage, or the consistent Christian uprightness of his character?

It is not for the biographer to say how far he has accomplished his work successfully; but he claims for it, from the critic, that indulgence which is due to the first adventurer in a new field; it may fall far short of the greatness of the subject, but it is at all events a serious attempt to supply what has long been felt as a want in our literature. To the writer, indeed, the work has been in truth a "labour of love;" he only hopes that the reader in perusing the book may enjoy some share of the abundant pleasure with which it has been produced.

For the engraving which accompanies the work, the biographer has to record his acknowledgments to the Dean of Canterbury, who has kindly permitted it to be engraved from a portrait in the possession of the Dean and Chapter, which seems to possess a better claim than any other to be considered an authentic likeness of the great Reformer.

St. Luke's, Chelsea, *August*, 1869.

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LIFE OF LATIMER.

CHAPTER I.

Early Life, 1485–1524.

Of the birth and parentage of Latimer not much is known for certain beyond what is contained in the oft-quoted passage, which has almost acquired a prescriptive right to stand at the outset of his biography. Preaching before King Edward vi. the Reformer thus recounts the circumstances of his early life:—

"My father was a yeoman, and had no lands of his own; only he had a farm of three or four pounds by year at the uttermost; and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half-a-dozen men. He had walk for a hundred sheep; and my mother milked thirty kine. He was able, and did find the King a harness, with himself and his horse, while he came to the place that he should receive the King's wages. I can remember that I buckled his harness when he went unto Blackheath Field.[1] He kept me to school, or else I had not been able to have preached before the King's majesty now. He married my sisters with five pound or twenty nobles apiece; so that he brought them up in godliness and fear of God. He kept hospitality for his poor neighbours; and some alms he gave to the poor."[2]

Latimer's ancestors have not been traced further back

[1] Where the Cornish rebels were defeated, June 22, 1497.

[2] Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 101, of the Parker Society Edition; the edition always referred to in this biography.

than this honest yeoman, whose little farm was in the neighbourhood of Thurcastone, a small village in Leicestershire. The name Latimer was not uncommon in England;[1] and in Leicestershire, for upwards of two centuries before the birth of the Reformer, there had flourished a family of Latimers, powerful knights and wealthy proprietors.[2] Coming apparently from the neighbouring county of Northampton, where their name is still preserved in the village of Burton Latimer, near Kettering, they had, by fortunate intermarriages, acquired extensive possessions in the south-eastern parts of Leicestershire. They were Lords of the Manors of Smeton, Westerby, and Foxton; and the armorial cognisance of the family, the gold cross in a red field,[3] which had followed Edward Longshanks to the Scottish wars, may still be seen in the windows of some village churches in the county, the sole memento of squires, whose very name has almost perished. For, before the commencement of the Wars of the Roses, the Leicestershire Latimers, so far, at least, as heralds took cognisance of them, had become extinct; but, in the North of England, a younger branch of the family, who had settled in Yorkshire, and become allied with the great Westmoreland Nevilles, produced a race of Latimers, who rose to conspicuous eminence in the State; and, through them, the name is still preserved in existence in the peerage of England.[4]

[1] Latimer, say the etymologists rather fancifully, is the same as Latiner, *i.e.*, one who understood and interpreted Latin, and afterwards an interpreter in general.

[2] The history of their acquisitions may be traced in the *Inquisitiones post mortem;* and their pedigree is given in Nichols' *Leicestershire,* Lansdowne MSS., and elsewhere, copiously enough, but without in any way throwing light upon *our* Latimer's descent.

[3] *Gules, a cross patonce, or.*

[4] Viscount Latimer is one of the titles of the Duke of Leeds.

There is much probability that the Reformer was descended in some way from this once powerful family of Leicestershire Latimers. Some younger son, driven from the home of his ancestors, or self-exiled, may have retired to the pastoral seclusion of Thurcastone, and there founded a family of yeomen Latimers, destined in a few generations to surround the name with a more abiding glory than any of the achievements of heraldry.

Thurcastone, anciently Turchitelestone, is one of those peaceful villages which remain almost undisturbed by the tide of manufacturing energy that has overflowed England. It lies in the valley of the Soar, at the foot of the Charnwood Hills, sheltered on all sides by gentle eminences, and surrounded by places of historical interest. To the south the ancient county town of Leicester can be descried, with the ruins of that renowned abbey where the dust of Wolsey reposes. Rothley Temple, the birth-place of Macaulay (one of the earliest of modern writers to recognise the merits of Latimer), is just behind the village on the north. To the east there is a glorious prospect across the fertile vale of Belvoir; while westward, beneath Barden Hill, wave the stately forests of Bradgate Park, once the home of Lady Jane Grey.

The village is of unknown antiquity. It may have existed when the Roman legions marched along the neighbouring Fossway. It is mentioned in Domesday; and at the Conquest the manor was given to Hugh de Grentmaisnil, who made over the patronage of the parish church to the Abbey of St. Evraux, in Normandy, in whose hands it remained almost to the era of the Reformation.[1] The village has never been very populous. When Elizabeth ascended the throne it numbered only twenty-five families;

[1] Harleian MSS., 6700.

and at the period of Latimer's birth, some seventy years before, its inhabitants probably did not amount to much above a hundred souls. Tradition points to a rude substantial farm-house in the village, near the church, as the very home in which Hugh Latimer was born. Possibly this building may occupy the site of his birth-place; but an inscription on the house itself, assigning it to the first year of Elizabeth's reign—three years, that is, after Latimer was burned at Oxford—must be considered a conclusive disproof of the fond tradition of the villagers.

The precise year of Latimer's birth is a subject much debated. The authorities for fixing this important point are few, and are unfortunately not easily reconcilable. Foxe states that Latimer was sent to Cambridge at the age of fourteen. Now, from the University Register, it appears that he took his Bachelor's degree in 1510, after the four years' residence then customary. In 1510, therefore, he would be, according to Foxe's statement, eighteen years of age; and his birth would thus be assigned to the year 1491 or 1492. This has accordingly been assumed as the correct date by the most recent inquirers.[1] There is, however, another contemporary authority more intimately acquainted with Latimer's history than Foxe; and his account would lead us to assign Latimer's birth to a somewhat earlier period. Augustine Bernher, Latimer's servant, constantly in attendance upon him, and to whom, indeed, we owe the preservation of many of his sermons, speaks of his master as being "above threescore and seven years of age"[2] in the reign of Edward VI. Edward's reign extended from 1547 to 1553; and this statement of Bernher's would,

[1] *e.g.* Cooper, *Athenæ Cantabrigienses*; *Froude*, vol. ii.; Corrie in the prefatory Memoir to Latimer's *Sermons*.

[2] Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 320.

therefore, place Latimer's birth somewhere between 1479 and 1486. It is unquestionable that Latimer's contemporaries uniformly speak of him as having attained an extreme old age. "Old Hugh Latimer" was his familiar appellation among the people for many years before his martyrdom. But if he was born, as has been maintained in 1491, he was not more than sixty-four at his death; and it seems incredible that he should have acquired the reputation of extreme age when he was still under sixty. Probability seems, therefore, to incline to an earlier date than 1491; and with due regard to all that is known of Latimer, his birth may be assigned to the year 1484 or 1485. An earlier date would leave a large part of his life a total blank; a later date is at variance with the uniform tradition of contemporaries as to his age.

Towards the close, therefore, of the brief reign of Richard III., when men were everywhere looking for some one to deliver them from the tyranny of the usurper, or, perhaps, when the din of war was sweeping across the Leicester Downs, and the armies were mustering for the last fight in the Wars of the Roses, the little farm-house of the Thurcastone yeoman was gladdened by the birth of a son, who was duly christened in the old font at the parish church, and named Hugh, after his father. He was, it is believed, the youngest child, and the family consisted of six daughters, and several other sons. The children do not seem to have been robust. Latimer's brothers all died in early childhood; and he himself inherited a weakly constitution, which often, in later years, sadly interfered with his labours. Some of his sisters, we have heard Latimer declare before Edward, grew up to womanhood, and were married, probably to neighbouring yeomen or thriving citizens of Leicester; but even tradition

has not preserved the names of any of their husbands. The only fact discovered concerning their families is that a daughter of one of these sisters, a niece consequently of the great Reformer, was married to Dr. Thomas Sampson,[1] a well-known Divine, who was ordained by Ridley, and in Elizabeth's time was Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, but was subsequently removed for Nonconformity, and appointed Master of Wigston's Hospital, in Leicester. Latimer himself was never married,[2] and it is to this family of the Sampsons, therefore, that we must look as the only persons entitled, so far as has been ascertained, to claim kindred with the great English Reformer.

Latimer's father belonged to that class of sturdy, well-to-do yeomen, who formed at that period the best representatives of the general intelligence and character of the English nation. As yet manufactures were few and unimportant; trade was in its infancy; large towns had not become the chief and almost exclusive centres of action and influence: the bulk of the population lived in such villages as Thurcastone. The yeomanry constituted the real strength of the country, the glory of England, the envy of other nations. From this class, too, most of the great leaders of the sixteenth century proceeded. Luther and Knox, Zwingle and Melancthon, More and Wolsey, Latimer and Erasmus, all sprang from the sturdy yeomanry or the simple handicraftsmen of the day. It was no unimportant element, therefore, in that discipline by which Latimer was prepared for his great function as the popular

[1] Nichols' *Leicestershire.*

[2] Parsons, the Jesuit, indeed, mentions Latimer as one of the pillars of the Reformation, who were *married* priests or friars; but his authority is worthless. The Duchess of Suffolk also speaks of "the churching of Latimer's *wife;*" but she seems to be in a joking humour. See, however, *infra*, under the year 1552.

Reformer of England, that his birth and early education threw him amongst those whom he was afterwards to instruct and influence. A man of the people, his eloquence was all the more likely to touch the chords of popular sympathy.

The early training of Latimer would be such as became the son of a pious, hospitable yeoman, of "right good estimation." Book-learning would constitute but a small part of his education. In his earliest years we may fancy him following his mother to milk her "thirty kine;" or accompanying his father to the fields. As he grew older, we may suppose him repairing with the rest of the family to the fairs and festivals of Leicester, amused at the sports of that ancient city, and amazed at the elaborate religious performances. In the long winter evenings he would listen to reminiscences of Bosworth Field, where many of the neighbours must have fought, or perhaps to older traditions of the bloody fights of the Yorkists and Lancastrians, or the glorious victories of their ancestors at Cressy and Agincourt. The piety of his father would ensure an early acquaintance with the legends of the Church, and a careful practice of such religious exercises as were deemed appropriate to his tender years. One point it is important to observe. Leicestershire had been the cradle of Lollardism: Lutterworth, the scene of Wickliffe's labours was but a day's journey from Thurcastone; and, doubtless, there were some secret Wickliffites among the neighbouring villages. Latimer's home, however, was, we know, kept free from any taint of what the Church called heresy; and it was not till he had reached mature life that he heard the infallibility of the Church assailed. To his mother he only once alludes, in the passage already quoted: and it may be assumed as probable that she died in his childhood, and

that he thus never enjoyed that gentle training which a child receives from the lips of a loving mother. His father survived her for many years; lived long enough to witness his son's triumphs in the University; long enough, let us hope, to be cheered by that purer faith which his son was one of the first to publish in England.

The young Latimer, like many other delicate children, was a precocious boy. Even "at the age of four or thereabouts," according to Foxe,[1] he had such "a ready, prompt, and sharp wit, that his parents purposed to train him up in erudition and knowledge of good literature." Schools were rare in those days, and good literature was still rarer even at such schools as there were: but the parish priest would be able to communicate some instruction to the young scholar; and Leicester was at hand, and its lordly abbey, with its well-furnished library, and numerous monks, would surely be able to supply such knowledge as was then cultivated.

Of one part of his education the law took cognisance; and that was carefully superintended by his father, as Latimer afterwards gratefully acknowledged:—

"My poor father was as diligent to teach me to shoot, as to learn me any other thing; and so I think other men did their children; he taught me how to draw, how to lay my body in my bow, and not to draw with strength of arms, as other nations do, but with strength of the body. I had my bows bought me according to my age and strength; as I increased in them, so my bows were made bigger and bigger; for men shall never shoot well, except they be brought up in it; it is a goodly art, a wholesome kind of exercise, and much commended in physic."[2]

In this calm eventless routine the first fifteen or twenty

[1] *Foxe*, vol. v., 437. The edition here (and always in this biography) quoted, is Seeley's, London, 1838. The paging, in general, corresponds with the excellent edition by Prebendary Townsend.

[2] *Sermons*, p. 197.

years of Latimer's life were passed. Only on one occasion did anything occur to break in upon the tranquil monotony of this peaceful existence. It was the occasion alluded to by Latimer in the sermon already cited. The Cornishmen, enraged at a heavy subsidy imposed to meet the invasion of the partisans of Perkin Warbeck, rose in rebellion; marched with little opposition through the southern counties; and encamped on Blackheath, preparatory to an attack on London and the Tower. Henry VII. hastily raised an army, and amongst others, Latimer's father was summoned to the field. It was the young Latimer's first contact with war; and we may well fancy that it was with no ordinary emotion that the precocious boy of twelve, nursed up in the traditions of an English yeoman's home, buckled his father's armour, and saw him depart for the conflict. The war was soon over. The insurgents were defeated on Blackheath, June 22, 1497. Warbeck, the source of the disturbance, was taken prisoner in September, and there was no further danger that threatened the throne: we may suppose, therefore, that Latimer's father would be at his home again in time to secure his harvest; and the long evenings in the Thurcastone farm-house, would, that winter, be beguiled by a fresh budget of adventures in the field, and new tales of the wealth and wonders of London.

Meantime, in the great world beyond the Leicestershire village, there were many indications that some mighty change was at hand. For ages torpor and mental inactivity had prevailed, and the current of thought seemed, as it were, to have been ice-bound; but now the atmosphere was instinct with life and motion, and the long-frozen stream was beginning again to flow. Not long before Latimer's birth printing had been invented; and the press was silently but irresistibly preparing the way for the

downfall of mediævalism and the revival of religion and letters. While Latimer was at school, America was discovered; the very limits of the globe seemed to have expanded, and a spirit of adventure and enterprise was evoked which communicated itself to the age, and made men restless and predisposed to change. On the Continent there had been a great revival of learning. The scholars of the day, abandoning the barren disputations of the schoolmen, and the dreary theology of the time, had devoted themselves to the study of the great classical writers of Greece and Rome, long buried in oblivion, but now disinterred and made accessible through the press. Polite letters and sound knowledge received a vast impulse, the full effect of which was not even imagined by the great patrons of learning. As yet, however, this movement had not reached England; though a few Englishmen, enthusiastic in the pursuit of knowledge, had travelled to Italy and France to drink at the pure fountains of revived taste.

The reign of Henry VII., after the suppression of the disturbances excited by Symnel and Warbeck, was not marked by any transaction of importance. One event, however, destined in the next generation to produce the most momentous results, was in those last years of the fifteenth century, slowly advancing to its accomplishment. Henry, a shrewd and politic monarch, was anxious to strengthen his family by some powerful foreign alliance; and proposed a marriage between Arthur, Prince of Wales, and Catherine of Arragon, daughter of the wealthy and powerful sovereigns of Spain. There were difficulties however in the way. Henry's title to the throne was a doubtful one. Warwick, son of the Clarence who had been, according to tradition, drowned in a butt of wine, was still in existence, and though of weak intellect, was the unquestionable

representative of the Plantagenets. But Henry had already imbrued his hands in kindred blood; and in 1498 Warwick perished on the scaffold. The nuptials were still deferred, however, on account of the youth of the bridegroom; and not until November 14, 1501, was the long-meditated alliance completed. Four months afterwards Prince Arthur died; and Henry, fully determined at all risks to retain in his coffers the enormous dower of the Spanish princess, proposed that the widow should be married to his second son. Such a proposal had many obstacles to encounter. The young prince was only eleven years of age, and resolutely protested against the match. It was besides opposed to the canon law of the Church, and was contemplated with horror by most people as abominable and incestuous. Long years of intrigue followed; Henry even offering to marry Catherine himself, and so terminate the negotiations. At length a dispensation for the marriage was procured from Rome; and it was agreed that the nuptials, which had occupied the Courts of England and Spain since the year 1488, should be solemnised when the youthful Henry attained maturer years.[1]

At his schools Latimer had made such progress, and exhibited such a decided bent for study, that his father determined to send him to the University of Cambridge. His delicate constitution was unsuited for the labours of a yeoman; and everything pointed to the Church as the proper profession for one so studious and so zealously attached to the services of religion. And whatever were the corruptions of the Church, it was her boast, and one grand source of her strength, that her doors were open to

[1] The curious reader will find the whole complicated negotiations arranged in Bergenroth's *Venetian and Spanish State Papers*, published in the series of *Calendars of State Papers*.

all comers, and that in her service the son of the humblest peasant might rise by merit alone to rank above the proudest peer of the realm: indeed, there was at that very time, a young chaplain at Calais, Thomas Wolsey, by name, the son of a butcher in Ipswich, who by sheer force of superior intellect was to rule England for nearly a quarter of a century. It may have been because some of the colleges in Cambridge possessed property not far from Thurcastone, that Latimer was sent to study at that University rather than at Oxford; or some other consideration, unknown to us, may have determined his choice; it is certain, however, that in the spring of 1506, the young scholar removed from his home, and became a student at Cambridge.

The Cambridge of Latimer's time was not the Cambridge of our day. Scarcely one-half of the seventeen colleges of which that University now boasts, were then in existence: there were, however, plenty of hostels or college boarding-houses; students were probably more numerous than at present, and there were several religious houses filled with troops of monks. The older writers uniformly speak of Latimer as a student of Christ's College, an old foundation which had fallen into decay, but which was, in 1506, rising from its ruins under the fostering care of the great patroness of learning of that day, Margaret, Countess of Richmond, mother of the sovereign who then ruled in England. There is not, however, any record preserved in any of the Cambridge Registers which confirms this opinion of the older writers; it would rather seem, indeed, that Latimer was entered a student in Clare Hall, for Ridley, when officially visiting Cambridge in the reign of Edward VI., speaks of Clare Hall as the place of his education; and the earliest record of his presence in the University, asso-

ciates him with the same college. About the beginning of February, 1510,[1] while still an undergraduate, Latimer was elected to a fellowship in Clare Hall. At the period of his election he was what is in the University styled *Quæstionista*, that is, he was just preparing to obtain his Bachelor's degree, or was an undergraduate in his last or *twelfth* term, for in those times twelve full terms were kept before proceeding to the degree of Bachelor. His election to a fellowship at this early period of his University career, may fairly enough be considered a confirmation of the uniform traditional account of his high reputation for learning and ability. The neighbours of old Hugh Latimer at Thurcastone, had loudly condemned his extravagance in spending so much money on his son's education; this election to a fellowship would silence the objectors, for though it only entitled Latimer to one shilling and fourpence per week for commons, and an additional sum of one pound three and fourpence a year,[2] yet in those frugal times it was not impossible to live decently even on this slender income. If Latimer had hitherto studied at Christ's College, as the older writers maintain, his election to a fellowship would, of course, compel him to remove to Clare Hall, and continue his studies there; curiously enough, however, the only person ever spoken of as his tutor was Dr. Watson, who certainly belonged to Christ's College, and was indeed its fourth Master.

A few weeks after his election to the fellowship, he pro-

[1] "Etiam circa festum Purificationis proxime sequens, eligebantur in socios istius Collegii (viz., Clare Hall), Dominus Johannes Powel, et Dominus Willelmus Pyndar, in artibus Baccalaurei, et Dominus *Hugo Latymer* Quæstionista."—Cambridge Records, quoted in Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Biography*, ii. 446.

[2] It is generally agreed that money in those days had fifteen times its present value; the sum in the text would thus amount to upwards of sixty-six pounds of our money.

ceeded to his degree of Bachelor of Arts. The Grace for this degree is preserved in the *University Grace Book*, and runs in the usual form,[1] except that it is noted that Latimer had, in one of his terms, not attended the customary instruction, from what cause is not stated.

Three years more spent in study, he proceeded to the higher degree of Master of Arts, the Grace for which, in the customary form, is preserved in the *University Grace Book*, for the year ending at Michaelmas, 1514.[2] In the years intervening between the two degrees, he had made choice of the profession to which his life should be devoted, and had entered the Church. He was ordained at Lincoln, his birth-place being in that very extensive diocese; but as no record of his ordination is preserved in the Register of Lincoln, the exact date cannot be fixed; the locality, however, is placed beyond doubt by his own testimony.[3] It may be assumed, in the absence of any positive statement, that he was ordained shortly after he had taken his Bachelor's degree; for he had then attained the canonical age, and there was no reason therefore for any delay. On graduating as Master of Arts, he became what was styled a Regent in the University, and would naturally take some share in instructing the undergraduates: we know scarcely anything, however, of any of his pupils, except that in a later part of this Biography, we shall

[1] "Conceditur Hugoni Latymer ut duodecim termini, in quorum quolibet, excepto uno, ordinaria audiverit, etsi non secundum formam statuti, sufficiant sibi ad respondendum quæstioni."—*University Grace Book*, Michaelmas, 1509, to Michaelmas, 1510.

[2] "Conceditur Domino Latymer ut lectiones ordinariæ novem terminorum auditæ, cum quatuor responsionibus, quorum una erat in die cinerum" (Ash Wednesday), "altera in finali determinatione, et duae aliæ in grammaticâ, quarum altera in die conversationis, altera in scholis publicis, sufficiant sibi ad incipiendum in artibus, sic ut solvat Universitati, 13 sol. iiijd." (13s. 4d.)

[3] *Sermons*, p. 298.

find one of them, Brigenden by name, among the bitterest of his opponents, when he began to preach the doctrines of the Reformation.

From 1514, when he graduated as Master of Arts, we have no further official record of him till 1522, when he appears in the Proctors' Books, as one of twelve preachers, appointed by the University in accordance with an old custom, and licensed, in virtue of a peculiar privilege of Cambridge, to officiate in any part of England. In this appointment we have the first recognition of Latimer's ability in that special sphere of labour for which he possessed so many eminent qualifications, and in which he was destined to be so signal a benefactor to his country. In the same year he was also selected to carry the silver cross of the University in all solemn processions, a graceful tribute to the uprightness of his character, for this office was usually "reserved for such an one as in sanctimony of life excelled all other."[1] In the regular course he next proceeded to the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. The Grace for this degree has not been preserved in the University Records, which were not very carefully kept in those times; but the following curious entry in reference to this degree occurs in the Proctors' Books for the year ending Michaelmas, 1524:—

"Baccalaurei in Theologia—

M. Latymer.
M. Stafforth.
M. Rogers.
M. Thyxtyll. } *nihil.*

&c., &c."[2]

[1] Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, from a MS. by Ralph Morice, Secretary to Cranmer. The MS. says, "For his gravity and *years* he was preferred to keep the cross:" a confirmation of the view here adopted as to Latimer's age.

[2] Townsend's *Foxe*, vol. vii. Appendix.

that is, the Masters of Arts whose names are thus given, had graduated as Bachelors in Theology, but had not paid the customary fees, perhaps from poverty, or because they had been excused for some special ground, or for some other reason, which it is, of course, idle to conjecture.

Such are all the authentic official notices of Latimer's career at Cambridge, from his entering the University in 1506 up to the year 1524. They are few, yet what more could be expected to be recorded of the uneventful life of an earnest student? The real life of Latimer, the growth of his intellect, the development of his character, these went on silently, and left no external record. Under any circumstances, these eighteen years, at the critical period of a man's life, when he passes from boyhood into the matured intellect and the serious responsibilities of manhood, are of the utmost importance. Spent in a University, they would naturally be expected to form and fix Latimer's opinions, and fashion his life and character on a type from which he would not afterwards materially vary. These eighteen years, moreover, were not years of ordinary calm academic routine. Within the University, and without, all was in a tumult of excitement. The greatest revolution that had occurred in Europe since the Christian era was shaking society to its very centre; every heart was stirred to its depths; an earnest controversy was everywhere waged, in which it was impossible to stand neutral; every man was roused to think, and to decide, and to act; and life became instinct with a vigour and reality which had been unknown for many years. Into the nature of this great movement we shall have to glance before proceeding further with the narrative of Latimer's life; first of all, however, let us fill up the meagre picture of his early college years with some of those incidents, forgotten now, which in their day

filled the University with excitement, and formed the theme of Latimer's thoughts and conversation with his fellow-students.

In the spring of 1506, just after Latimer had entered the University, and before the first edge of the novelty of everything around had been blunted, there were great doings at Cambridge, filling the undergraduate world with excitement and amazement. On St. George's Eve, April 22, the King (Henry VII.) came to visit Cambridge, accompanied by his mother, the Countess of Richmond, the foundress of Christ's College, where (if we believe the old writers), Latimer was studying. The Mayor and other municipal officials rode out two or three miles to welcome the distinguished visitors; "and as he approached the University, within a quarter of a mile, there stood first of all the four orders of friars, and after, other religious, and the King, on horseback, kissed the cross of every of the religious, and then there stood all along all the graduates after their degrees, in their habits, and at the end of them was the University Cross" [which Latimer himself was to bear one day], "where was a form and a cushion, as accustomed; there the King did alight, and the Bishop of Rochester [Fisher] then being Chancellor of the University, accompanied with other doctors, censed the King, and after made a little proposition, and welcomed him."[1] The young freshman from Thurcastone was, of course, among the wondering crowd, and for the first time beheld the royalty of England, and witnessed the stately ceremony which attends on kings. The same year, without pomp or state, a shrewd-looking diminutive Dutchman, Erasmus by name, arrived at Cambridge; and his coming, scarcely noticed at the time, produced much more abiding consequences than

[1] Cooper's *Annals of Cambridge*, from Baker's MSS.

the royal progress, with its procession and censing, and nine-days' wonder. In 1509, both Henry VII. and the Countess of Richmond died, and the scholars of the University, Latimer amongst them, would be invoking the muses to celebrate in woeful elegies the decease of those patrons of learning.

In 1520, Wolsey, then in "full-blown dignity," paid a visit to Cambridge, and was received with the honour due to his rank and influence. Indeed, the University authorities carried servile flattery almost to the verge of blasphemy in their entertainment of the great King Cardinal. Bryan Roo, Fellow of King's College, was appointed to welcome him in a Latin oration, and, among other compliments, he applied to Wolsey the declaration of the Psalmist concerning the Messiah—"Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedeck."[1] An altar was erected, and a magnificent entertainment was provided, the bill of fare including "two oxen, six swans, six great pikes, six shell fish, and a great river fish called a breme,"[2] for which six and eightpence, an exorbitant price in those days, was paid. Not uncommonly the reception of such visitors was followed by a plague, so severe as to compel the discontinuance of the ordinary University work; and the explanation of this phenomenon throws a curious light (or shade ?) upon the domestic manners of our ancestors. When any visitor of rank was expected, special care was taken to clean the streets; and as they were usually dirty and unscavenged as those of an Oriental city, the common receptacle for the filth and *débris* of the town, it is not surprising that the occasional stirring of this accumulated litter should beget a plague. In this same year of Wolsey's

[1] The speech is given entire in Lamb's *Original Documents*, etc.
[2] Cooper's *Annals of Cambridge*.

visit, Luther's works were ignominiously burned at Cambridge, Latimer, no doubt, looking on with delighted approbation, as Saul did at the stoning of Stephen; but, as we shall see, this burning of Luther's books could not prevent his opinions spreading rapidly among the students. Queen Catherine also visited Cambridge about this time, but she had not yet become the great apple of discord, dividing England into hostile camps. Finally, in 1522, Henry VIII. himself came to the University, and was received as he loved to be received, with profuse and magnificent pomp. The University Cross was borne solemnly before him, on this occasion probably by Latimer himself, who was rewarded with the very modest sum of sixteen pence[1] for performing this duty.

So much for the incidents of Latimer's college career. As to the education then given at Cambridge, the ingenuous mind thirsting for knowledge was supplied with the most meagre intellectual provender. Scholastic theology was the supreme study. "For thirty years," says Erasmus, "nothing was taught at Cambridge except the 'Parva Logicalia' of Alexander,[2] and the Questions of the Scotists."[3] Polite letters, pure Latinity, exact science, rational Scriptural theology, were all unknown. Oxford was proverbial for its bad Latin; and Cambridge did not put the sister University out of countenance by its superiority. On the Continent the reviving intellect of the rising generation had rebelled against this barbarism, and had even dared to ridicule the blind teachers who had so long claimed the monopoly of knowledge. It was impossible for men any longer to believe the foolish legends

[1] Cooper's *Annals of Cambridge*, I. 306.
[2] *i.e.*, Alexander of Aphrodisias, one of the commentators upon Aristotle.
[3] Erasmus' *Epistles*, A.D. 1513.

which constituted the bulk of the theology of the age. Men who had studied the great models of classical taste and eloquence, laughed to scorn the idle wrangling of the scholastic divines; and the scandalous lives of many of the clergy furnished an endless theme for raillery and indignant reprobation. This movement for the revival of taste, and the cultivation of true knowledge, had made considerable progress on the Continent before it affected the condition of England. Scholars needed patrons and protectors, and Henry VII. was too parsimonious, and too much engrossed in political affairs, to have leisure or funds for the promotion of learning.

The accession of Henry VIII. introduced an important change. The young sovereign had none of the vices of his father. Handsome, affable, generous; possessed of enormous wealth; enjoying the affection of his subjects, and holding the throne by a title which none could dispute; he had fortunately received an excellent education, which his shrewd practical intellect enabled him to use to the best advantage. He was fond of pleasure and gaiety, as indeed was natural in one elevated to a throne at an early age, and succeeding to almost boundless hoards of money; but he delighted also in learning, and was resolved to make his reign remarkable by his patronage of men of letters. Wolsey, his Prime Minister, "was a scholar, and a ripe and good one," according to the scholarship which was, however, beginning to be superseded, and he was, at all events, a munificent patron of learning. Scholars found favour at Court. Thomas More, one of Henry's chief favourites, was esteemed the greatest genius in England, and enjoyed a splendid reputation even on the Continent for learning and wit. Fisher and Colet, Grocyn, Linacre, and William Latimer, were well known for their

zeal in the revival of letters. Henry was looked upon as a second Augustus, the friend and patron of the muses; and Erasmus, writing in a vein of somewhat jubilant anticipation, foretold that "the golden age was again returning to bless mankind," now that the Court of England was "better furnished with learned men than any University."[1] Erasmus himself, the most distinguished scholar of the age, conspicuous for the extent and variety of his learning, his taste, his wit, and his facile and vigorous pen, had paid a short visit to England in the reign of Henry VII., but was now invited to return and settle at one of the English Universities, that he might introduce some of that revived taste which had already been diffused over many parts of the Continent.

In 1510, therefore, just as Latimer was busy preparing for his first degree, Erasmus, the renowned leader of what was commonly styled "the new learning," came a second time to Cambridge. Fisher, the Chancellor of the University, was one of those who had invited him; and there were other friends of the new learning in England who were prepared with open arms to receive the great scholar, and eager to profit by his instructions. But Erasmus had also numerous and determined enemies, for he had called in question the teaching of the Church, and had censured the lives and morals of the clergy; and already the great majority of the ecclesiastics had begun to look askance upon this new learning, as likely to prove in the end a source of mischief and heresy. Shortly after his arrival in Cambridge, Erasmus was appointed Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, and this position brought him into more decided conflict with the theologians of the University. In 1511 he published his famous "Encomium Moriæ," or

[1] Letters to Banisius, and to Sir H. Guildford.

"Praise of Folly," an unrivalled satire, directed chiefly against the mendicant friars, the most ignorant and immoral of the religious orders. The exuberant wit of the book, rendered still more piquant by the amusing illustrations of Holbein, which made the jests patent to all readers, secured for it a circulation unprecedented in those times. The friars retaliated as well as they could, and vented many a bitter joke against the conceited little Grecian ("Græculus iste"), but Erasmus, secure in the protection of his powerful patrons, heeded not their opposition, and continued his lectures on Greek and theology. At first his audience was small, and his scholars, he complains, were so poor that they could not pay for their instruction. Soon, however, the fruit of his labours began to appear. In 1513 he boasts that Cambridge was not inferior to any University in Europe, and he especially rejoices in the vast progress made in theological learning.[1] By way of reward for his ill-requited services, a pension was granted to him from the living of Aldington, in Kent, which was still paid to him when that village attracted the attention of all England, through the revelations of the Nun of Kent.

A continued residence in England did not, however, suit the wandering and unsettled inclinations of Erasmus. In 1514 he left Cambridge and returned to the Continent; but his influence did not cease to operate. Learning had received an impulse which no opposition could stay, and the University was able to supply from its own members illustrious scholars, well qualified to continue the work which Erasmus had begun. Under Croke, Wakefield, Smith, and Cheke, the study of polite letters was carried on with unflagging vigour; and the great number of men of eminence who proceeded from Cambridge at that period, gave the

[1] Erasmi *Epistolæ*, anno 1513.

most conclusive proof of the extent to which fresh intellectual life had been infused into the University.

Erasmus, it has been said, attacked the vices of the clergy, and satirised their ignorance; and his labours, and those of his compeers in the revival of letters, were of essential service in preparing the way for the reformation of religion, the other great movement of the period. The two movements were, however, entirely distinct; differing in their aims, and differing more widely in the treatment which they experienced from the great and the powerful. The first twenty years of the sixteenth century was pre-eminently the age of the scholars; and philology and polite letters had a fair field, and ample opportunity to accomplish their mission among men. Unlike the Reformers, the scholars were everywhere courted and patronised by the great. They were the favourites of kings, and the popes were proud to promote their labours. They had the field all to themselves. Luther was still in his monastery, seeking peace with God; Zwingle was at college; Knox and Calvin were in their cradles. Whatever the scholars wished to accomplish was within their power. But it was merely or mainly an intellectual want they endeavoured to supply. They wished to purify the literary taste of the age, to point their contemporaries to the true sources and methods of knowledge and scientific inquiry, to purge the religion of the day from what was barbarous and incredible. Of any deeper necessity for true spiritual life they took no notice; of any heartfelt longing for truth and reality in religion, of any earnest aspiration after the knowledge and love of God, they had nothing to say. These matters were beyond their depths; they only aimed at such an improvement in the language and teaching of theology as might bring it into harmony with the more refined taste of the

scholars of the age. They never dreamed of any reformation in religion, which might bring the poor and the ignorant, as well as the learned and refined, into contact with the same everlasting source of peace, and the same all-perfect model of spiritual life. And when the trial came, when the preaching of Luther compelled all men to decide between the contending parties, the great scholars, who had been conspicuous as the revivers of letters, were, in general, found no less averse to the teaching of the Reformers than to the ignorance and immorality of the monks. The Italian scholars seem, in many cases, to have practically relapsed into the Paganism of the old classical authors they so much admired. Linacre, one of the earliest to introduce the new learning into England, glancing at the New Testament for the first time when on his death-bed, read our Lord's words, "swear not at all," and immediately closed the book with the exclamation, "either this is not true, or we are not Christians." Many of the most distinguished English scholars were opposed to the Reformation. Fisher, More, and Gardiner, among the chief patrons of learning in England, were also (especially the last two) chief among the enemies of the Reformers. Erasmus himself, the greatest of all the scholars, who only wanted a little more energy of character to have been one of the greatest of the Reformers, after halting all his life between the two contending parties, died at last in the communion of that Church whose authority he had done so much to shake. Once again, as in the days of St. Paul, it was the "foolish things of the world that were chosen to confound the wise;" simple earnest men found that life and truth which the profoundly wise and learned were too refined and fastidious to seek. The scholars did, indeed, awaken the mind of the age; but when the nations,

longing after some better spiritual sustenance for their souls, came asking bread, the scholars did not understand the nature of their wants, they were unable to supply them, and had to give place to the Reformers. Cicero and the humanities were excellent for men who only wanted to gratify a cultivated taste; but Christ and the Gospel alone could suffice for the weary soul that longed for life and peace.

Erasmus, by his residence in Cambridge, had wonderfully promoted the revival of learning in England; he was also instrumental in communicating an impulse to the Reformation in this country. When he left Cambridge he devoted his energy for some time to the production of a good and authoritative edition of the Greek New Testament. After two years' hard labour, this, the *editio princeps* of the New Testament in the original, appeared at Basle, in 1516, with a Latin translation and notes by Erasmus. The Word of God in any of the vernacular tongues had long been rigorously prohibited by the Church; but no evil consequences were anticipated from a book which was sealed except to scholars; and high ecclesiastical dignitaries approved and patronised it. One college in Cambridge (and that not improbably Latimer's college of Clare Hall,[1]) did, indeed, distinguish itself by forbidding the introduction even of this Greek New Testament within its walls; but Erasmus's reputation as a scholar, and kindly recollections of his personal instructions, would naturally secure for it a cordial reception in the University. And it was to a copy of this New Testament, read by a single devout student, that the origin of the Reformation movement in the University may be traced.

[1] The master of Clare Hall, Nattares, was the most determined of the adherents of the old learning.

Among the students at Cambridge at that time, Thomas Bilney, feeble and diminutive in person ("Little Bilney," Latimer calls him), was conspicuous for his ability, his energy, and his almost ascetic devotion. He had passed through something of the same mental struggle as Luther: like him, he had been intended for the law, and had forsaken it for the Church; and, like him, he, by fasts and mortifications sought peace for his soul. But his story is best told in his own simple words:—

"I also, miserable sinner, before I could come unto Christ, had spent all that I had upon ignorant physicians, that is to say, unlearned hearers of confession; so that there was but small force of strength left in me (who of nature was but weak), small store of money, and very little wit or understanding; for they appointed me fastings, watchings, buying of pardons and masses; in all which things (as I now understand), they sought rather their own gain, than the salvation of my sick and languishing soul. But at last I heard speak of Jesus, *even then when the New Testament was first set forth by Erasmus* [*i.e.* A.D. 1516]; which when I understood to be eloquently done by him, being allured rather by the Latin than by the Word of God (for at that time I knew not what it meant), I bought it, even by the providence of God—as I do now well understand and perceive—and, at the first reading, as I well remember, I chanced upon this sentence of St. Paul (Oh most sweet and comfortable sentence to my soul!) in 1 Tim. i.: 'It is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be embraced, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief and principal.' This one sentence, through God's instruction and inward working, which I did not then perceive, did so exhilarate my heart, being before wounded with the guilt of my sins, and being almost in despair, that immediately I felt a marvellous comfort and quietness, insomuch that my bruised bones leaped for joy."[1]

It was a repetition of the experience through which Luther had just passed in his cell at Erfurt; but as yet the name of the great German monk had never been men-

[1] *Foxe*, vol. iv., pp. 635, &c.: Bilney's *Letters to Tunstal*.

tioned in England. Bilney, having found peace and comfort to himself, became the centre of a new movement in the University. Timid and retiring, his influence was exerted in secret; he never appeared as a public teacher of any new system, but, in private intercourse with his friends, he talked to them of life and hope. Gradually and imperceptibly the leaven of his teaching began to operate. Tyndale was at Cambridge in 1519, and may have learned from Bilney that supreme love for the Word of God, and that intense desire to make it accessible to his countrymen, which were the ruling passions of his life. It was only by slow degrees, indeed, and after the lapse of many years, that the influence of Bilney, in promoting the Reformation, became apparent; and the retiring modesty of the man has prevented his receiving that honour, as the first English Reformer, which so justly belongs to him. There was, no doubt, a movement towards a Reformation external to the Universities, and which may be traced in part to the teaching of Wickliffe; but that grand movement which issued in the establishment of a Reformed Church in England originated in the Universities, and must be ascribed to the simple earnest piety of Bilney.

By-and-by the reputation of Luther spread to England, and his boldness encouraged those who sympathised with his teaching. Copies of his works were eagerly demanded, and were so extensively circulated in England that Wolsey issued a commission to the Bishops, Deans, and heads of colleges, ordering them to make rigorous search for any of Luther's books, and to punish all who refused to deliver them up.[1] The example of Luther was soon followed by greater activity on the part of the students of Scripture in Cambridge. Theology had for centuries been taught from

[1] The commission is in Strype, *Eccl Mem.* I. pt. ii. p. 20.

the works of the School-men, and especially from the "Sentences." One of Bilney's disciples, however, George Stafford, introduced an important innovation. When he was appointed Reader of Divinity, he discarded the old text-books, and not only read lectures from St. Augustine, but expounded Holy Scripture itself, both Old Testament and New, in the original languages to crowds of listening students.

Such, therefore, were the movements that were occupying all minds at Cambridge during the years when Latimer was in residence; how, then, it may be asked, was he affected by this revival of learning and of religion that was taking place around him? It is not difficult to answer this question. The mere fact that his name never occurs in connection with the early stage of either of these movements is a significant indication of the part which he played.[1] And his writings supply abundant evidence as to his opinions in those years of his life. From the first he ranged himself among the opponents of Erasmus and Bilney. He looked with suspicion on all this new learning as a dangerous sign of the times. Greek, which some Churchmen thought the native language of heresy, he never learned. "I understand no Greek," he said, when on his trial at Oxford in the very last year of his life; and, though we may, perhaps, be justified in explaining his assertion in a somewhat qualified sense, yet it is clear, from his occasional references to Greek, that he was the merest tyro in that language. His study lay in those school-doctors whom the Church had for centuries honoured as the pure fountains of wisdom, and the standard of orthodoxy; he was learned in Duns Scotus and Dorbell, in Hugo de Victore, and,

[1] He has by some writers been confounded with William Latimer of Oxford, and praised for a learning which he did not possess.

above all, in Thomas Aquinas, the "Angel of the Schools." He, too, like Luther, and like Bilney, was seeking rest and peace to his soul ; and, for a time, he seemed to find it in devotion to the ceremonies of the Church. He shut his ears resolutely against all proposals to change or reform the traditions of the Fathers ; and, when the voice of controversy began to rise high in the University, he sighed for the peace of the cloister, and almost resolved to enter a monastery, and take the vows of a religious. Yet, with all this his mind was not at ease, and death seemed terrible to him ; and this fear, also, tended to drive him, as it had driven Luther, into the presumed protection of the sanctity of monastic life. "I have thought, in times past," he wrote in after years,[1] "that if I had been a friar and in a cowl, I could not have been damned nor afraid of death, and I have been minded many times to have been a friar when I was sore sick and diseased."

Never did any priest more conscientiously observe all the rubrics of the missal. "I remember how scrupulous I was in my time of blindness and ignorance : when I should say mass, I have put in water [among the sacramental wine] twice or thrice for failing ; insomuch when I have been at my *memento*, I have had a grudge in my conscience, fearing that I had not put in water enough."[2] One little incident of the period is amusingly characteristic of Latimer's life and belief in those days :—

"I was once called to one of my kinsfolk (it was at that time when I had taken degree in Cambridge, and was made Master of Art), I was called, I say, to one of my kinsfolk which was very sick, and died immediately after my coming. Now there was an old cousin of mine which, after the man was dead, gave me a wax

[1] *Letter to Sir Edward Baynton* ; *Remains*, p. 332.

[2] *Sermons* I. 138. The *memento* in the mass occurs shortly before the time when the priest communicates.

candle in my hand, and commanded me to make certain crosses over him that was dead; for she thought the devil should run away by-and-by. Now I took the candle, but I could not cross him as she would have me to do: for I had never seen it afore. Now she, perceiving that I could not do it, with a great anger took the candle out of my hand, saying, 'It is pity that thy father spendeth so much money upon thee.' And so she took the candle, and crossed and blessed him, so that he was sure enough."[1]

Devout and upright himself, and conscious of his own sincerity, he saw no need for any reformation of the lives or teaching of the clergy. His great anxiety was that all men should, like himself, yield implicit obedience to the Church; and as heresy seemed to spread amongst the students, his zeal urged him to warn them of the danger of their proceedings, and to entreat them to follow what he believed to be the only path of security and peace. Stafford's innovations excited his liveliest indignation. "Perceiving the youth of the University inclined to the reading of the Scriptures, and leaving off the school-doctors, he came amongst the youth, gathered together of daily custom to their disputations; and there most eloquently made to them an oration, dissuading them from this new-fangled kind of study of the Scriptures, and vehemently persuaded them to the study of the school-authors."[2] Till the close of 1523, therefore, Latimer was one of the great champions of the Church and the old learning in the University. He was then nearly forty years of age, and apparently there was no great risk of any change taking place in his opinions. The rashness and impetuosity of youth were over. Probably of all the Cambridge men of the time, the devout University Cross-bearer was the very last whose defection the Church would have feared; the very last whom any intelligent

[1] *Sermons*, p. 499.
[2] *Latimer's Remains*, p. 27.

observer would have selected as destined to be the great popular preacher of the Reformation in England.

One brief glance at the progress of political affairs in Europe during these eventful years will enable us to understand the position of parties, which was not without its influence upon the great religious changes in England. Two powerful monarchs were then contending for supremacy in Europe—Charles v., King of Spain and the Low Countries, and Emperor of Germany, and Francis i., King of France. Both were young, able and ambitious; and for some time their power seemed equally matched. In this state of affairs on the Continent, the alliance of Henry was eagerly sought by both the rivals; and England once again became of importance in the counsels of Europe. One of the first acts of Henry's reign, destined also to be one of the most momentous, was to consummate his long-projected marriage with Catherine of Arragon; and this naturally inclined him to espouse the interests of Spain. War with France ensued, carried on not without considerable success on the part of Henry, and largely instrumental in dissipating his father's enormous treasures; a result of no small importance in many of the future transactions of his reign. It was during the French war also that Wolsey, already a favourite with Henry, rose to almost supreme power in Church and State. Besides holding many minor lucrative ecclesiastical preferments, he was Archbishop of York, and Papal Legate; and was at the same time Lord High Chancellor of England. His unrivalled talent for business, his indefatigable energy, his skill in discovering men able to serve him, and his happy art of securing their affectionate attachment, made him for many years virtually the sovereign of the kingdom. His ambition, however, aimed at something higher even than this. He aspired to the

Popedom; and he hoped, by flattering the ambition of Charles and of Francis, both of whom assiduously courted him, to be elevated to the Papal chair. The election of Wolsey might have altered the history of Europe. Though no friend of the Reformed doctrines, though by no means a model of clerical propriety, yet no one saw more clearly the absolute necessity of some reformation in the lives and teaching of the clergy, and especially of the monastic orders. Under his steady guidance the Church would have presented a firmer and more united front to the rising storms of the sixteenth century; some compromise would have been effected with the demands of the Reformers; and an attempt would have been made to introduce some of those reforms which the condition of the Church so urgently required. Twice Wolsey was filled with the hope of reaching the great object of his ambition. But on both occasions, Charles, after promising his assistance, had secretly used all his energy to oppose his election. Wolsey was not the man to forget this treachery on the part of the Emperor; he excited Henry's jealousy of the growing power of Charles; and after the Battle of Pavia, he induced his sovereign to enter into an alliance with France to oppose the power of Spain. In this rooted hatred of Wolsey to Charles, and his eager desire for some vengeance on the treacherous monarch, another element was contributed towards that complicated strife which in England led to the Reformation.

Such was the position of parties about the year 1525. Henry was still living in peace and love with his Spanish spouse, undisturbed, to all appearance, by any fire of passion, and, so far as was known, by any qualms of conscience. Anne Boleyn, acquiring accomplishments at the Courts of Francis and Margaret of Valois, or secluded

from observation in the retirement of Hever Castle, was as yet unvisited by any dreams of her future eminence. Wolsey, busied with schemes for replenishing his master's empty exchequer, planning magnificent designs for reforming the Church and advancing learning, had not forgotten the intrigues of Charles, and was biding his time for revenge. Luther had burned the Papal decrees, and had defied the power of Rome. The Pope was anxiously deliberating how to stave off the threatened General Council, and to pacify the universal demand for a reformation. In England a few unknown scholars in the Universities, and a few mechanics in the towns and villages of the Eastern Counties, were studying their Bibles in secret, and were perceiving to their own utter amazement, the complete discrepancy between the teaching of Scripture and the doctrines of the Church which pretended to found its teaching upon Scripture. Charles and Francis were occupied with their rivalry for empire and supremacy. All were working out their own designs without concert or common purpose; and yet all were unconsciously "doing whatsoever the hand and counsel of God determined before to be done." (Acts iv. 28.) All were in reality promoting the same great end; and when the appointed time at length arrived, the causes thus operating apart, would be all, by the will of the Great Disposer of Events, compelled to combine their efficacy for the accomplishment of the predestined work.

CHAPTER II.

From Latimer's Conversion to his appearance before Wolsey. 1524–1526.

The progress of what were called Lutheran opinions in the University of Cambridge began at length to attract the attention of the authorities. In the short parliament of 1523, the only one summoned during Wolsey's supremacy (for the Cardinal, like Strafford, was averse to parliaments), it was resolved that "two of the Bishops should be desired to repair unto the University of Cambridge for examination, reformation, and correction of such errors as then seemed and were reported to reign amongst the students and scholars of the same, as well touching the Lutheran sect and opinions as otherwise." The suggestion came from one of the Bishops, probably from Fisher, the Chancellor of the University, who had just published a refutation of Luther's teaching; and other prelates confirmed the necessity of taking some precautionary measures to arrest the progress of the Reformed opinions. A rigorous inquisition at that period would unquestionably have done much injury to the cause of the Reformation in the University: no steps, however, were taken to enforce the recommendation of the Bishops. Wolsey had to be consulted before any active measures could be adopted, and he "expressly inhibited" the threatened visitation of the University, "by means where-

of," as it was urged against him on his impeachment, "the said error crept more abroad, and took greater place."[1]

It may seem strange that Wolsey should thus, as it were, interfere to shelter heretics from detection and punishment; but the Cardinal had his own reasons for this procedure. He rather took a pleasure in thwarting the Bishops, so as to make them sensible of his superior authority; he was, besides, by no means inclined to be rigorous in searching for heresy, or severe in punishing it; he was, moreover, busied in planning his magnificent college at Oxford, and as he designed to fill it with the most promising young men in England, he did not wish to take any step that might unnecessarily alienate the youth of Cambridge; finally, he meditated a general reform of the whole ecclesiastical system of England, and therefore resented the contemplated visitation of the Bishops as an officious interference with his great design. Wolsey's ideas of the reformation that the Church required were somewhat indefinite, and certainly would be by no means sweeping or thorough; still it is important to observe that it was not merely the Reformers who maintained that some reformation of the innumerable abuses of the Church was urgently required: the great authorities in the Church had long seen this necessity, but had felt themselves utterly at a loss to cope with abuses that had existed for so many ages, and which seemed inseparably incorporated with the very constitution of the Church.

It was in the interval of peace thus strangely procured by the unexpected protection of Wolsey, that Latimer was converted to the opinions of the Reformers. It has already been noticed that he graduated as Bachelor of Divinity in the year which ended at Michaelmas, 1524. It was required

[1] *Herbert*, p. 228; Article 43 of Wolsey's impeachment.

that on the occasion of taking his degree he should deliver a public discourse on some theological subject. With the characteristic zeal of an ardent lover of the Church, indignant at the success of the heresy which was everywhere finding disciples, he directed his whole oration against Philip Melancthon, the eminent German Reformer, who had recently impugned the authority of the school-doctors, and had maintained that they must all be tested by the supreme standard of Holy Scripture. Bilney was present at this intemperate declamation, and perceived that the honest preacher was "zealous without knowledge." In all probability Bilney had often before listened to Latimer's violent denunciations of the new opinions, and looked upon him as the most determined of his opponents; but now something in the preacher's manner, or some casual expressions in his oration, revealed to Bilney an experience like that which he had himself passed through, and from which he had found so happy a release in the study of the Holy Scripture. He determined, therefore, to seek an interview with Latimer, not without the hope that even this opponent might be brought to seek for peace and life in the Word of God, and not in the subtilties of the school-men or the ritual of the Church. He went to Latimer in his study, and desired him "for God's sake to hear his confession." "I did so," says Latimer; "and to say the truth, by his confession I learned more than before in many years."[1] We cannot doubt what the tenor of Bilney's confession would be. Latimer had just been denouncing the study of the Holy Scripture as dangerous to the soul, and had recommended his hearers to seek for peace and spiritual life in implicit obedience to the teaching of the Church and the prescriptions of her ministers. In

[1] Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 334.

reply to all this, Bilney would repeat the touching story of his own spiritual conflict—how he had gone about seeking to find health and comfort to his sick and languishing soul; how he had applied to those physicians that Latimer so much commended, and had diligently used all their remedies, but had found no benefit; how he had fasted and done penance, how he had prayed and mortified himself, till he was more dead than alive, and yet he had not thereby received any assurance of peace with God, but was filled with despair; how, at last, he had read that Book which Latimer had condemned as fatal to the soul, and all at once he had felt himself healed as by the hand of the Divine Physician. Was he to abandon his peace, and go back again to his penance and despair? The case was beyond the limits of Latimer's narrow experience. He had imagined that these students of Scripture were proud, obstinate heretics, outwardly despising the ordinances of the Church, but inwardly ill at ease in their own minds; and here was the very leader of these heretics in the University, a simple honest soul, who had found that peace which Latimer had been seeking in vain. His wonted confidence in his old prescriptions failed him. The simple story of Bilney's spiritual conflicts, uttered in the solemn silence of Latimer's study, awoke in his heart thoughts and emotions too deep for utterance. It was a revelation of a truth and a life of which he had never heard before; of that very peace and health for which he had been yearning for years.

His first act, we may well believe, would be to procure that New Testament which he had so often denounced, and to read and study for himself. And as he read, the clouds and darkness passed away, and the true light shone in from the eternal heavens beyond. Instead of an austere Deity,

needing to be propitiated by penances and painful watchings, there rose up before him the blessed revelation of free forgiveness and peace by the blood of Christ, and the glorious vision of the Divine life of Christ, so widely different from the blind monkish idea of a noble life, and yet felt at once by the honest heart to be the perfect type of all that is good and true. That peace which he had so earnestly sought in the multiplied observances of a ceremonial devotion, was here freely offered to all who would in faith and humility accept it. He no longer sighed for the security and sanctity of the monastery; for the same Scriptures which assured him of forgiveness and peace, called him to a nobler life of energy and action in the busy world outside the convent walls. The change in Latimer's life and opinions could not long be hid: the very openness and frank impetuosity of his character would render any concealment impossible. In a very short time it was obvious to all in Cambridge that the University Cross-bearer, the former opponent of all Lutheran opinions, had gone over to the side of the Reformers. A change so striking and so abrupt could not but attract attention; even the most bigoted could not deny its genuineness, for the character of Latimer was above suspicion. The pious students of Holy Scriptures saw in it a repetition of the great scene on the way to Damascus: the Head of the Church, who had called Saul from persecuting the Christians to be the Great Apostle of the Gentiles, had again curbed their chief opponent in the height of his career, and sent him forth to preach that faith which once he despised.

The precise date of this grand occurrence in Latimer's history can be fixed with tolerable accuracy. It was nearly coincident with his graduation as Bachelor of Divinity, which the University Registers show took place between

Michaelmas, 1523, and Michaelmas, 1524. In all probability his conversion may be assigned to the spring of 1524.

We must not overrate the extent of the change which had taken place in his life and opinions. Bilney and his friends had not separated themselves from the communion and teaching of the Church. They had no new creed; no new form of worship. Latimer remained, therefore, as before, a priest of the Church in which he had been baptized and ordained; he officiated at her altars, as before; and preached, as before, in her pulpits. On two great points, however, he had learned something new. He understood now that the laborious system of penance, intercession of saints, invocation of the Virgin, and other ceremonies of the Church, all intended (as they were usually understood) to atone for sin and procure peace with an offended God, were superfluous, and worse than superfluous, for Scripture plainly declared that Christ had come and made peace already. No works of men could make atonement for sin; no saints, no angels could procure men salvation; and so far as these tended to shut out from men's view the only Saviour, they were abuses against which Latimer now saw it his duty to warn the people. He learned also to form a widely different idea of the life which it became a Christian to lead. The voluntary works of man's invention, which he had formerly supposed to be the highest exhibitions of piety—the creeping to the cross on Good Friday, the decorating of images, the offering of candles before the shrines of saints—these he now perceived to be far less noble than the careful performance of the duties which God had enjoined—visiting the sick, relieving the poor, teaching the ignorant, leading all men to repentance.

On other points Latimer's opinions remained for the present unchanged, and only altered slowly in his future

career. Probably in consequence of his disgust with his former scholastic studies, he from this time manifested a disinclination to theological controversy, and occupied himself entirely with matters of obvious practical importance; and down to the close of his life, long after even the cautious Cranmer had in the main adopted the creed of the Continental Reformers, Latimer continued to believe and to teach some of those doctrines which are usually considered most characteristically the errors of the Church of Rome. He was in truth the most practical and the most conservative of all the Reformers. Remove the abuses that encouraged immorality and superstition, allow the Holy Scriptures to be freely circulated and read, and Latimer would have permitted the Church in other matters to teach as she had taught before. He wished no great change of creed; he was no advocate for the sweeping removal of institutions which had been the growth of centuries.

Bilney was now Latimer's constant companion in his study and in his expeditions abroad. One favourite walk they had where they were daily to be seen, and which the wits of the University nicknamed the "Heretics' Hill." Under Bilney's influence, too, his studies were completely changed; "he began to smell the Word of God," he says in his own quaint language, "and forsook the school-doctors and such fooleries."[1] He shared also in those works of charity and benevolence for which Bilney had been long conspicuous. Together the two friends went to instruct and to relieve those outcasts for whom no man cared; they were especially assiduous in visiting the prisoners in the town of Cambridge; and they used to preach in the lazarcots or fever hospitals, and did not disdain to render to the unhappy sufferers those offices of kindly charity

[1] *Sermons*, p. 335.

which were in those days too frequently denied them. In these new studies, and this happy, friendly intercourse, and active Christian charity, Latimer spent the rest of the year 1524. Wolsey's protection screened the little company of converts from any persecution; and though Latimer had doubtless excited suspicion by the change of his opinions, it is pleasing to observe, from the few records of the period that have been preserved to us, that he had not forfeited the high position which his character and learning had previously secured him in the University.

Thus on the 28th of August, 1524, a deed was executed, conveying to Latimer and others certain lands in order to find a priest to celebrate mass in the chapel of Clare Hall, for the soul of one John-a-Bolton.[1] The bequest is conclusive evidence of the esteem in which Latimer continued to be held; and at the same time proves that he had not yet learned, as he subsequently did, to look upon purgatory as "a pleasant and profitable fiction, born and brought forth in Rome, by means of which the Church had got more by dead men's tributes and gifts than any emperor had by taxes and tallages of them that were alive."[2]

To the close of 1524 also belongs the earliest of Latimer's letters that has been preserved. It refers merely to the election of a High Steward for the University of Cambridge, a matter of little consequence now, though it produced the usual excitement in the little academic world of the time, and is of interest to us solely as affording a glimpse into Latimer's position and pursuits at this period of his career.

"To Dr. Greene[3] (Vice-Chancellor of the University).

"When I arrived last night at Kimbolton, most worshipful father,

[1] Cooper's *Athenæ Cantabrigienses.* [2] *Sermons*, p. 50.
[3] The original in Latin, from the Parker MSS., in Cambridge, is printed in *Latimer's Remains*, p. 467.

on my way to my native place, I soon learned from Mr. Thorpe" [unknown personage, perhaps the parish priest of Kimbolton] "and others of good credit, after mutual greetings and compliments, that nothing would at present give more pleasure to Mr. Wingfield" [Sir Richard Wingfield, of Kimbolton Castle, a courtier in high favour with Henry] "than to succeed to the office which Mr. Lovell held amongst us" [office of High Steward of the University: Sir Thomas Lovell had died May 25th, 1524]. "Not that a man so full of honours, and so signally enriched with abundance of all things, looks upon so trifling a salary as any object; but being a man of a noble mind, he is extremely anxious to be on terms of intimacy with men of letters and cultivators of the muses. And so anxiously does he cherish this wish, so eagerly does he seek the office, that as we had nothing to allege in excuse, except a pledge previously made to the honoured More" [Sir Thomas More], "we are told that More has been already prevailed upon by the King's solicitation to give place to Wingfield, so that we may, without compromising our honour, accede to Wingfield's wishes. It is unquestionable that by his singular politeness he makes everyone in this neighbourhood his friend, and secures their attachment by deeds of kindness; and is, in short, a universal benefactor.

"It is a matter, therefore, for you to consider with your customary good sense. On you especially depends the whole business in which the interest, the credit, the splendour of the University, are so much involved. Thorpe, whom we both admire so much, and who is so devoted to you, thinks that nothing could be more beneficial to the interests of our literary republic than granting this favour. For, to say a single word for Wingfield, who is now-a-days more in the royal confidence than he, or readier to speak for his friends to the King? Or, who among the lay nobles is a greater friend of learning? But perhaps I shall appear to you rather officious than discreet in speaking so plainly to your worship. It is Thorpe, however, who has instigated me. My zeal, my sense of duty, my affection to our literary republic have impelled me. Forgive one who if he errs, errs through good intentions.

"Farewell, your worship. I write very late at night, after a day of equinoctial rains; half suffocated and almost stupified with the heat of the sun, the fumes of the victuals, and the rest of the feasting.

"From Kimbolton, the day after St. Edward's Day' [*i.e.*, October 14th.]

"Your Latimer."

We know not what family necessity had called him home at this time; but in a large family, whose members were all grown up and many of them aged, such occasions would of course occur. The letter is written in elegant and terse Latin (Latimer's Latin style, indeed, is much superior to his English), and though it throws no light upon that interesting phase of his new life on which he had entered, a subject to which he never refers in his letters, it is the production evidently of an active man, shrewd and discreet in the conduct of business, and holding a position of honourable esteem in the University.

Wolsey's arrangements for the magnificent college at Oxford, which was to perpetuate his name, were in the mean time approaching completion. The Pope's bull had armed him with authority to provide the necessary funds for his enormous outlay by the suppression of some of the smaller religious houses, a precedent which was not forgotten in subsequent years; and he spared no pains in searching for young men of learning and ability to equip his college. Cambridge (thanks to the impulse which Erasmus's presence had given) then abounded in such students; and Wolsey's agents were sent with ample commission to secure, by liberal rewards and promises, such students as were likely to communicate a lustre to the new seat of learning.

Their visit was a highly successful one. Some eight or ten of the choice young men of Cambridge were induced to accept their munificent invitations, and were in a few months transferred from the banks of the Cam to what was then known as St. Frideswide's or Cardinal College, Oxford.[1] Among those selected were Richard Cox, John

[1] Their names are found in the lists of those incorporated at Oxford, November 5 and December 7, 1525.—Wood's *Athenæ*.

Clarke, John Fryer, Godfrey Harman, Henry Sumner, William Betts, John Fryth, Goodman, and Radley. They were all chosen on account of their abilities; and if any suspicion of heresy was whispered against any of them, Wolsey was not the man to attach very much importance to it. It is not a little singular, however, that all those named were more or less under the influence of Bilney's teaching; and their transference to Oxford was thus the means of propagating on a fresh field that truth which Bilney had found in the study of Scripture. For some years after their removal all continued quiet, and no danger was apprehended; but in 1528 an alarming explosion of heresy occurred in Cardinal College, to the dismay of the University authorities. Inquiry revealed to them the source from which the heresy had been introduced into Oxford; and sad reflections were made on Wolsey's indiscretion. "Would God," said one of the heads of houses, "My Lord's grace had never been motioned to call Clarke, nor any other Cambridge man, into his most towardly college. We were clear, without blot or suspicion, till they came; and some of them long time hath had a shrewd name."[1]

During the greater part of the year 1525, Latimer, Bilney, and Stafford continued to teach without molestation. The authorities had not yet taken alarm at the progress of reformed opinions in England; and as has been already noticed, Latimer only by slow degrees departed from the ordinary teaching of the Church. The free forgiveness of sins by the atonement of Christ was plainly preached as it had never been preached before, and gross practical abuses, tending to conceal Christ and His salvation from the eyes

[1] Dr. London, Warden of New College, to Bishop Longland. Original in the State Paper Office.

of the people, were attacked and condemned; but there was no open contradiction or denial of any of the commonly-received articles of the Church's creed; there was no departure from the customary ceremonies of religious worship; no declaration of hostility against the Church's authority. Men had their suspicions of the tendency of the teaching of Latimer and his friends; but it would have been difficult to convict them of heresy even in an ecclesiastical court. So late, indeed, as the month of July, 1525, West, Bishop of Ely, a man by no means inclined to look with favour upon the progress of reformation in the Church, granted Bilney a licence to preach anywhere in his diocese,[1] so little danger was as yet apprehended from the movement that had been begun in the University.

Thus left perfectly free to preach their opinions, Latimer and Bilney were gradually forming for themselves a numerous party of disciples in the University. Their influence was continually on the increase, and accessions were daily made to the list of earnest students of Holy Scripture. Among the most important of those recent converts was Robert Barnes, Prior of the monastery of Augustine Friars, in Cambridge, a man destined to play a somewhat conspicuous part in the subsequent transactions of Henry's reign. He had studied at Louvaine, where he acquired a distinguished reputation as a brilliant classical scholar; and on his coming to Cambridge, his lectures on Cicero, Terence, and Plautus, were thronged with admirers of the classics. He expounded St. Paul also, but without well understanding the Apostle's meaning, and chiefly, it would appear, as a means for giving vent to his fierce polemical

[1] "Dominus concessit licentiam Magistro Thomæ Bilney ad prædicandum per totam dioc. Elien., ad beneplacitum suum duraturam."—West's *Register*.

temper and love of personalities—faults which more or less appeared during the whole of his career. The influence of Bilney, Stafford, and Latimer, led him to a better appreciation of the teaching of St. Paul, and though he did not at once openly avow himself an adherent of their doctrines, he was known to be friendly to them; and his position as head of a monastery exempt from episcopal control, enabled him to render them very essential service in a critical emergency.

At length rumours of the rapid increase of Lutheran opinions throughout England began to excite serious alarm in the minds of the ecclesiastical authorities; and towards the close of 1525 the suspicion seems to have dawned upon the Bishop of Ely that he had, perhaps, been somewhat too easy and remiss, in so long tolerating what was possibly heretical and dangerous to the interests of the Church and the University. Loud complaints were made especially against the preaching of Latimer, but the Bishop wisely determined to hear and judge for himself, taking care to keep his purpose secret, that the preacher might have no opportunity of making any special preparation for his coming. He ascertained accordingly the day on which it was Latimer's turn to preach in Latin in the University Church; and coming up unexpectedly from Ely, he entered the church just as the preacher had well begun his sermon. Latimer acted with admirable sagacity and presence of mind. He waited calmly till the Bishop and his splendid retinue were seated, and then resumed his preaching, but skilfully changed his subject. "A new audience," he adroitly remarked, "especially of such rank, deserves a new theme." He selected, therefore, as the starting-point of a fresh discourse the words of St. Paul, "Christ being come, a High Priest of good things to come," &c. (Heb. ix. 11.)

These words naturally led him to speak of the office and duties of a priest, and especially of a bishop or high priest, and to treat of the life of Christ as the great pattern and model to which all priests and bishops should conform. One can easily imagine the powerful effect of such a subject treated in Latimer's homely, clear, graphic manner. The carelessness of the clergy was the great scandal and abuse of the day, and in a sermon preached to an audience of clergymen, Latimer's theme was peculiarly important. His hearers could not but feel how widely they had departed from the Divine model of true pastors of Christ's people, and suspect that (as a contemporary writer expresses it) "they were not of that race of bishops which Christ meant to have succeeded Him in His Church, but rather of the fellowship of Caiaphas and Annas."[1]

West was much too sagacious to acknowledge his own guilt by abusing the preacher: on the contrary, he treated him with great, and even exaggerated courtesy. When service was over he sent for Latimer, and thanked him for his excellent sermon. He had never heard his office so admirably expounded before; "indeed," he added, "if you will do one thing at my request, I will kneel down and kiss your feet for the good admonition that I have received of your sermon."

"What is your lordship's pleasure that I should do for you?" quoth Mr. Latimer.

"Marry!" quoth the Bishop; "that you will preach me, in this place, one sermon against Martin Luther and his doctrine."

It was an ingenious ruse on the part of the Bishop, but Latimer was more than a match for him. "My lord," he

[1] Ralph Morice, Cranmer's Secretary, from whom the narrative is borrowed.—*Latimer's Remains*, p. xxviii.

replied, "I am not acquainted with the doctrine of Luther, nor are we permitted here to read his works" [Wolsey had prohibited them in 1521], "and therefore it were but a vain thing for me to refute his doctrine, not understanding what he hath written, nor what opinion he holdeth. Sure I am that I have preached before you this day no man's doctrine, but only the doctrine of God out of the Scriptures. And if Luther do none otherwise than I have done, there needeth no confutation of his doctrine. Otherwise, when I understand that he doth teach against the Scripture, I will be ready with all my heart to confound his doctrine as much as lieth in me."

The cautious shrewdness of this reply was too much for West's temper; and he broke off the conversation abruptly with the petulant remark, "Well, well, Mr. Latimer, I perceive that you somewhat smell of the pan: you will repent this gear one day."

West lost no time in showing his animosity. He preached publicly against Latimer and his doctrines in Barnwell Abbey, near Cambridge; and formally inhibited him from officiating in any part of his diocese or in any of the University pulpits. Such a step taken a few months earlier might have interposed a serious obstacle to the progress of the Reformation in Cambridge; but, as it was, the inhibition altogether failed in its effect. Barnes, already more than half gained over to the cause of Latimer and Bilney, and constitutionally predisposed to adopt any procedure that might bring him into conflict with a bishop, at once openly declared himself on the side of the Reformers. His monastery, like many other religious houses, was exempt from episcopal jurisdiction; and this gross abuse, which had been encouraged by the Popes, was now found serviceable to the cause of the Reformation. Undeterred

by West's prohibition, therefore, Barnes boldly placed his pulpit at Latimer's disposal for the next Sunday.

It was Christmas Eve, and the churches would, in the ordinary course of things, be well filled with worshippers. But on this occasion the whole University was in a ferment, for it was felt that a crisis was at hand, and all were anxious to hear what Latimer had to say for himself. The little chapel of the Augustinian monastery was accordingly crowded with an overflowing audience. What theme Latimer chose, or how he treated it, we do not know; his sermon we may be sure would be an honest and a temperate one: but while he was preaching, something was occurring elsewhere in Cambridge, which, for the time, diverted public interest to another person. At the request of the parish, Barnes was also preaching in St. Edward's Church the same day. It was his first appearance as a Reformer, and his sermon at once produced an explosion in the highly-charged atmosphere. His text, chosen from the Epistle for the day ("Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men"), might have suggested the propriety of some caution and moderation. But Barnes was excited by the occurrences of the past few days; he saw among his audience some of the most bitter opponents of the new doctrines, and some personal enemies; and the provocation proved too strong for his impetuous temper. Diverging from his subject, he made some caustic remarks intended to "prick" the enemies whom he saw present;[1] and then launched out into a furious attack of the whole body of the clergy, and especially of the Bishops. The Bishops, he declared, were followers of Judas, who had the purse, and

[1] The narrative is founded on Barnes's *Supplication to Henry VIII* London, 1534.

not of Christ; they were like Balaam, they rode upon asses—the ignorant people, namely, whom they pillaged and abused. In the horns of their mitres he recognised the horns of the false prophet; and their pastoral staff seemed to him expressly designed to knock the sheep on the head. Wolsey in particular, who surely deserved some consideration at the hands of a Cambridge Reformer, was singled out for special denunciation. His many offices, his large dioceses, his state and pomp, his magnificent apparel, his pillars, his cushions,[1] his two crosses, his golden shoes, his red gloves—"bloody gloves to keep him warm amidst his ceremonies"—were all held up to the scorn and reprobation of the audience.

A sermon so violent and so personal at once provoked a crisis. Ridley, one of the Fellows of King's College, and the enemy at whom Barnes had hurled some of his most offensive remarks, joined with Watson (Latimer's old tutor) and some others in presenting an accusation against Barnes before the Vice-Chancellor. Twenty-five articles selected from his sermon, and characterised as "some contentious, some seditious, some slanderous, some heretical," were laid to his charge; and he was required to recant or abide the consequences. Barnes affirmed that he had been misunderstood, and offered to explain his meaning next Sunday in the same place; but the Vice-Chancellor inhibited his preaching there. Bilney and Latimer were no doubt grieved and perplexed by the rashness and indiscretion of their new ally; still they made common cause with him, and their adherents, a numerous body, resolved to procure for him an open and fair trial. The whole University was

[1] In Singer's edition of Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey*, there is a curious engraving of one of Wolsey's progresses, in which these emblems, denounced by Barnes, are all introduced.

agitated with the discussion, and was divided into factions. The friends of Barnes had their head-quarters at a house called the "White Horse," conveniently situated so as to allow the members of King's, Queen's, and St. John's Colleges to enter unobserved, and facetiously styled "Germany" by their opponents. It seems to have been the chief object of Barnes's accusers to terrify him by threats into submission and recantation, without the formality of a public trial; and his friends were equally resolved to have all proceedings public. Scenes of confusion and almost riot followed, for men's minds were becoming excited.

After a month had been spent in this unsatisfactory manner, Barnes threw himself upon the charity of the Vice-Chancellor, and agreed to read a public recantation in the church where he had preached the offending sermon. But the terms of the proposed recantation were so extravagant, and involved such an unfair perversion of his language, that he refused to read it, and "hereupon," says he, "there arose a great tragedy amongst them." Alarming rumours besides began to circulate; report had just reached England[1] that some daring Englishman had translated the New Testament into the English language, and was about to circulate this dangerous book in every part of the realm; and it was believed that not only Cambridge but all England was filled with "pestilent books of Luther's perverse opinions." It was resolved, therefore, to strike a blow that should effectually arrest the progress of the Reformation in England. Communication was opened up with Wolsey, who naturally enough resented Barnes's unwarrantable attack, and a secret plan was devised for arresting Barnes, and at the same time seizing the prohibited books which were suspected to have been introduced into Cambridge. One part

[1] *Ellis's Letters*, third series, vol. ii. p. 71.

of the plan was accomplished with complete success. Barnes was openly arrested in the Convocation House, and hurried off to London.[1] The other part as completely miscarried. Dr. Farman, of Queen's College, heard the whispered plot, and immediately warned the suspected persons of the contemplated razzia upon their books. There was not a moment to lose; the books were conveyed to a place of safety; and when the sergeant-at-arms, who had arrested Barnes, proceeded in triumph to the very spot where the forbidden books were commonly kept—"God be praised, the books were not to be found."

It was on Monday, February 5 (1526), that Barnes was arrested, and on the Wednesday following, after waiting all day, he was brought before Wolsey in his gallery at Westminster. Gardiner, Wolsey's Secretary, and formerly Barnes's tutor at Cambridge, and Fox, also a Cambridge man, were the only persons present at the interview. The Cardinal read over the articles of accusation, and Barnes argued with considerable force in his own defence. Wolsey, of course, referred to the violent personal attack made upon himself, and criticised Barnes with some humour and severity. "Had you not a sufficient scope in the Scriptures, Master Doctor," he asked, "to teach the people, but that my golden shoes, my pole-axes, my pillars, my golden cushions, my crosses did so sore offend you that you must make us '*ridiculum caput*' amongst the people? We were jollily that day laughed to scorn. Verily it was a sermon more fit to be preached on a stage than on a pulpit." Barnes was urged to acknowledge his heresy, and submit to Wolsey, but he resolutely declined to submit, except in such matters as could be proved against him.

[1] *Foxe*, v. 416.

Next morning, after a sleepless night spent in writing his defence, Barnes was conducted to the Chapter House at Westminster Abbey, where a number of bishops and doctors were assembled for the trial of heretics. Again, with many threats, he was required to confess his heresy, and submit to the authorities; and again he declined. He was committed to the Fleet, and all intercourse with him was rigorously forbidden; Coverdale and others who had accompanied him from Cambridge were not allowed to see him; and a determined effort was made to work upon his fears. He was again examined, with the same result, on Friday. On Saturday, after being kept some hours in waiting, a long roll was put in his hand, and he was peremptorily required to read it as it stood, without any comment, or to "stand in jeopardy." Still Barnes demurred, and entreated his judges to show him his errors; to prove that his doctrines were heretical; at least to let him first of all see what he had to read. He went down on his knees, but his judges remained inexorable. "Either read the roll or be burned," said the Bishop of Bath, the president of the court. "I will not read," was Barnes's emphatic reply. The other judges present remonstrated with him: "It is but a small thing to read the roll," they urged, "and you will be never the worse for it; the Cardinal is considerate and merciful; submit to him, and trust to his generosity." This seeming sympathy with him effected what the threatened severity had failed to accomplish; Barnes took the roll, "read it, subscribed it, made a cross on it," swore to submit to any penance which might be inflicted upon him, and was reconducted to his prison. He was not alone in his humiliation: four Still-yard men, German merchants,[1] had been brought to trial for intro-

[1] First Series of *Chapter House Papers*, State Paper Office.

ducing along with other merchandise some of Luther's prohibited books; and, like Barnes, they had acknowledged their fault, and promised to submit to any penance that might be enjoined upon them. All were committed to the Fleet, preparatory to the grand scenic display that had been designed for the next morning.

On Sunday, therefore, as soon as it was daylight, Barnes and his companions, bearing faggots, marched through the crowded streets to St. Paul's; the warder of the Fleet heading the procession with his bill-men, and the knight-marshal with his tip-staves bringing up the rear. Old St. Paul's was already thronged with a somewhat noisy assemblage, eager to witness the spectacle. The proceedings have been described by Foxe, with unusual spirit, and we cannot do better than transcribe his narrative.

"The Cardinal had a scaffold made on the top of the stairs for himself, with six-and-thirty abbots, mitred priors, and bishops; and he, in his whole pomp, mitred (which Barnes spake against), sat there enthronised, his chaplains and spiritual doctors in gowns of damask and satin, and he himself in purple—*even like a bloody Antichrist.* And there was a new pulpit erected on the top of the stairs also, for the Bishop of Rochester" [Fisher] "to preach against Luther and Dr. Barnes; and great baskets full of books" [prohibited books that had been seized] "standing before them, within the rails, which were commanded, after the great fire was made before the rood of Northen" [the crucifix over the north door], "there to be burned. Now while the sermon was a-doing" [*doing* is literally correct, for, as Fisher himself confesses, "it could not be heard for the noise," and was therefore all dumb show,] "Dr. Barnes and the Still-yard men were commanded to kneel down, and ask forgiveness of God, of the Catholic Church, and of the Cardinal's grace; and after that he was commanded, at the end of the sermon, to declare that he was more charitably handled than he deserved, or was worthy—his heresies were so horrible and detestable. And once again he kneeled down on his knees, desiring of the people forgiveness and to pray for him. And so the Cardinal departed under a canopy, with all his mitred men with him. Then these poor men were commanded to come

down from their stage, and the knight-marshal and the warden of the Fleet were commanded to carry them about the fire. And so were they brought to the bishops, and there, for absolution, kneeled down; where Rochester stood up, and declared unto the people how many days of pardon and forgiveness of sins they had for being at that sermon, and there did he assoil Dr. Barnes with the others, and showed the people that they were received into the Church again."[1]

Such was the inglorious termination of Barnes's first appearance as a Reformer. A single sermon, marked much more by fierce personality than by simple honest zeal for proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, had involved the whole University for weeks in angry controversy; and this was the unhappy end—an ignominious denial of the truth before half the population of London. The scene at St. Paul's over, Barnes was again committed to prison during Wolsey's pleasure, and for some time he will disappear from this biography; we shall, however, only too frequently have occasion to regret the evil influence which the unhappy example of his recantation seems to have exerted over the English Reformers. It was a bad precedent, and, unfortunately, it was too often followed.

The position of Latimer and Bilney must of course have been seriously compromised by the conduct of Barnes. They had not, indeed, given offence as he had done by personal attacks upon the rulers of the Church; still, as the teachers of doctrines that were more than suspected of Lutheranism, they had many enemies, and the present seemed a favourable opportunity for utterly extirpating all heresy from the University. Accusations were accordingly presented against them, and they were summoned to London to answer for themselves before Wolsey; not very long,

[1] *Foxe*, v. 418, &c.

probably, after Barnes's appearance at St. Paul's.[1] They had given no personal provocation to Wolsey; the articles against them would seem slight and trivial after those which had been alleged against Barnes; the Cardinal was by no means of a sanguinary temperament, and was in high spirits from the success of his foreign policy, which at last seemed to promise him his long-desired revenge upon the perfidious Charles. The moment was an auspicious one, therefore, and the interview was unexpectedly productive of the best results for Latimer. We must again draw upon Ralph Morice, Cranmer's Secretary, for a graphic narrative of the proceedings.

"Latimer was called before Wolsey into his inner chamber by the sound of a little bell, which the Cardinal used to ring when any person should come or approach unto him. When Mr. Latimer was before him, he well advised him, and said,

"'Is your name Latimer?'

"'Yea, forsooth,' quoth Latimer.

"'You seem,' quoth the Cardinal, 'that you are of good years, nor no babe,[2] but one that should wisely and soberly use yourself in all your doings; and yet it is reported to me of you that you are much infected with this new fantastical doctrine of Luther, and such like heretics; that you do very much harm among the youth, and other light-heads, with your doctrine.'

"Said Mr. Latimer again, 'Your grace is misinformed; for I ought to have some more knowledge than to be so simply reported of, by reason that I have studied in my time both (of) the ancient doctors of the Church, and also (of) the school-doctors.'

[1] There are no means of fixing the exact date. Foxe, always confused in his chronology, is hopelessly incorrect in his sketch of Latimer's early life. Townsend, on the faith of an obscure letter of Sir Richard Morison's, fixes 1528 as the date; but Bilney (who was with Latimer) was apprehended in June 1527, and admitted on his trial that he had *previously* appeared before Wolsey. Besides, it is absurd to suppose that Latimer would be left unnoticed for nearly three years. Moreover, was he silent all that time? for, except on the theory in the text, he was prohibited to preach.

[2] Latimer was forty-one, according to the present biographer; thirty-five, according to other authorities.

"'Marry, that is well said,' quoth the Cardinal. 'Mr. Doctor Capon, and you Mr. Doctor Marshall[1] (both being there present), say you somewhat to Mr. Latimer touching some question in Duns.'

"Whereupon Dr. Capon propounded a question to Mr. Latimer. Mr. Latimer, being fresh then of memory, and not discontinued from study as those two doctors had been, answered very roundly; somewhat helping them to cite their own allegations rightly, where they had not truly or perfectly alleged them.

"The Cardinal, perceiving the ripe and ready answering of Latimer, said, 'What mean you, my masters, to bring such a man before me into accusation? I had thought that he had been some light-headed fellow that never studied such kind of doctrine as the school-doctors are. I pray thee, Latimer, tell me the cause why the Bishop of Ely and other doth mislike thy preachings: tell me the truth, and I will bear with thee upon amendment.'

"Quoth Latimer, 'Your grace must understand that the Bishop of Ely cannot favour me, for that not long ago I preached before him in Cambridge a sermon from this text, '*Christus existens pontifex, etc.*' (Heb. ix. 11), wherein I described the office of a bishop so uprightly as I might, according to the text, that never after he could abide me, but hath not only forbidden me to preach in his diocese, but also hath found the means to inhibit me from preaching in the University.'

"'I pray you tell me,' quoth the Cardinal, 'what thou didst preach before him on that text.'

"Mr. Latimer plainly and simply (committing his cause unto Almighty God, who is director of princes' hearts) declared unto the Cardinal the whole effect of his sermon preached before the Bishop of Ely. The Cardinal, nothing at all misliking the doctrine of the Word of God that Latimer had preached, said unto him, 'Did you not preach any other doctrine than you have rehearsed?'

"'No, surely,' said Latimer.

"And examining thoroughly with the doctors what else could be objected against him, the Cardinal said unto Mr. Latimer, '*If the Bishop of Ely cannot abide such doctrine as you have here repeated, you shall have my licence, and shall preach it unto his beard, let him say what he will.*'

"And thereupon, after a gentle monition given unto Mr. Latimer,

[1] Wolsey's chaplains. Capon was present at Barnes's arrest.

the Cardinal discharged him with his licence home to preach throughout England."[1]

Foxe, who is unusually inaccurate in his notice of Latimer's early life, speaks of him as having signed certain articles on this occasion;[2] and Lingard, in his meagre and unfair sketch, of course repeats the misstatement. But there were no articles subscribed at all, as is sufficiently evident from the fact that Latimer, when subsequently on his trial before Stokesley and Warham, was never accused of having "relapsed."

Latimer immediately returned to Cambridge, and the next holiday afterwards re-appeared in the pulpit, and read aloud that licence of the Cardinal, which, while Wolsey's power lasted, effectually protected him from all episcopal interference. Thus wonderfully, to the great gratification of the friends of the Reformation, and the confusion of its enemies, did Wolsey, the head of the Church in England, intervene for the second time to protect the progress of the Reformers in the University.

Several of Latimer's fellow-labourers had also been summoned before Wolsey, and all experienced the same unexpectedly mild treatment. The Cardinal had sufficiently vindicated himself by the punishment and humiliation of Barnes; and was not inclined, either by disposition or by policy, to show any great severity towards men who had given him no personal provocation. Latimer, as we have seen, returned to Cambridge, with an admonition to be cautious, but otherwise perfectly free and untrammelled. Bilney, however, did not escape quite so easily. No punishment was inflicted; no public recantation was exacted; but he was induced to promise on oath "not to

[1] *Latimer's Remains*, p. xxx. [2] *Foxe*, vol. vii. p. 454.

preach any of Luther's opinions, but to impugn them everywhere." Bilney was timid; Barnes's unhappy precedent was fresh in his recollection; and, in an evil hour, he took an oath which he could not keep without doing violence to all his convictions. It was a lamentable step in a man of Bilney's integrity; but it was some time before the English Reformers learned to "resist even unto death, striving against the prevalence of evil."

CHAPTER III.

From Latimer's appearance before Wolsey, to his appointment as Rector of West Kington, 1526–1531.

The controversy which Barnes's sermon had excited could not be without its important influence on Latimer's theological teaching. It would serve somewhat the same purpose that the controversy about indulgences did, in widening the scope of Luther's preaching. Those abuses which Latimer had gently censured, and which Barnes had so loudly denounced, were not mere accidental excrescences of the Romish ecclesiastical system, which the voice of a few preachers might abolish. They were the natural result, the visible embodiment of erroneous principles of belief which had long been admitted as unquestionable; they were intimately associated with the influence of the clergy, and were the great sources of their enormous wealth; they were fostered by the gross ignorance in which the people were kept, shut out from all opportunities of learning the truth which God Himself had revealed; and they were defended by the authority of an infallible Church. In spite, therefore, of his eminently practical and conservative tendencies, Latimer was compelled to enlarge the scope of his teaching, to protest against the sin of withholding the Word of God from the people, and in self-defence to assert those great rights of free inquiry and private judgment which had

so long remained in abeyance. It was an important step in advance, and it was fortunate that Wolsey's protection secured him from all official interference, so long as he kept within those bounds of prudence and moderation which a man of Latimer's temperament was not likely rashly to transgress.

Thomas Becon (one of Cranmer's chaplains), who was a student at Cambridge during those years, has preserved for us his recollections of Latimer's sermons at this period of his history:—

"I was present when with manifest authorities of God's Word, and arguments invincible, besides the allegations of doctors, he proved in his sermons that the Holy Scriptures ought to be read in the English tongue of all Christian people, whether they were priests or laymen, as they were called, which things divers drowsy dunces, with certain false-flying flattering friars, could not abide. . . . Neither was I absent when he inveighed against temple works, good intents, blind zeal, superstitious devotion, as the painting of tabernacles, gilding of images, setting up of candles, running on pilgrimage, and such other idle inventions of men, whereby the glory of God was obscured, and the works of mercy the less regarded. I remember, also, how he was wont to rebuke the beneficed men with the authority of God's Word, for neglecting and not teaching their flock, and for being absent from their cures.

"Oh! how vehement was he in rebuking all sins, namely, idolatry, false and idle swearing, covetousness, and whoredom; again, how sweet and pleasant were his words in exhorting unto virtue! He spake nothing but it left as it were certain pricks or stings in the hearts of the hearers, which moved them to consent to his doctrine. I leave off to report his free speech against buying and selling of benefices, against the promoting of them unto the livings of spiritual ministers, which are unlearned and ignorant in the law of God, against popish pardons, against the reposing our hope in our own works, or in other men's merits. Neither do I here rehearse how beneficial he was, according to his possibility, to poor scholars and other needy people; so conformable was his life to his doctrine. There is a common saying, which remaineth unto this day: 'When

Master Stafford read, and Master Latimer preached, then was Cambridge blessed.'"[1]

Three years of such teaching as this could not fail to be of great importance in creating among the clergy and learned youth of England an earnest desire for the Reformation of the Church. To Latimer himself this period of tranquil activity was of essential service. It matured his religious opinions; it deepened his conviction of the absolute necessity of some better and purer teaching for the ignorant and superstitious people; and it was an admirable preparation for his future career as the great popular preacher of his time. He had now found his true function in life, not that of a friar seeking peace in the austere discipline or the unprofitable meditation of his cell; but that of a diligent preacher swaying the minds of his hearers with words of earnest and impressive eloquence, exposing error, and superstition, and corruption, with a happy force of effective raillery that was unanswerable. Already he was recognised as a great power in the University, one of those preachers who possess the rare faculty of speaking to the hearts of their audience, and who never fail to leave their impress on their age. "I have an ear for other preachers," Sir John Cheke used to say, "but I have a heart for Latimer."

Though protected by Wolsey's licence from violent interference, Latimer had of course to pass through the customary ordeal of ridicule and controversy. Long-established abuses never want defenders; and Latimer, who had ventured to condemn practices that had been sanctioned by the custom of centuries, and the opinions of hundreds of school-doctors, was accused of arrogance and insufferable conceit in thus venturing to set up his individual judg-

[1] Becon's *The Jewel of Joy*, p. 425 (Parker Society Edition).

ment against the tacit consent of the whole Catholic Church. The authority of the Church—the usual argument which has always been alleged in defence of every abuse in morals and in doctrine, the customary bugbear for intimidating weak minds—was of course paraded before Latimer. "Consider that you are but a man," said Doctor Redman, who lived to see the folly of his own arguments; "lay down your stomach, and humble your spirit, and suffer not the Church to take offence with the hardness of your heart, nor that her unity and Christ's coat without seam (as much as lieth in you) should be torn asunder. Consider the saying of the wise man, and be obedient thereunto—'Be not wise in your own conceit.'" It was in the same spirit Luther had been attacked; it was in the same spirit the Founder of the Church Himself had been arraigned for not observing "the traditions of the elders." And all alike answered by appealing to a greater authority than the Church. "It is enough for me," was Latimer's reply, "that Christ's sheep hear no man's voice but Christ's; and as for you, you have no voice of Christ against me, whereas, for my part, I have a heart that is ready to hearken to any voice of Christ that you can bring me; so fare you well, and trouble me no more from the talking with the Lord my God."[1]

But it is time that we should take a brief glance at the progress of the Reformation outside the University of Cambridge. The Reformation in England, indeed, may be said to have resulted from the operation of *three* causes. One of these, which may not unjustly be styled *political*, we shall soon have occasion, in the course of this biography,

[1] *Foxe*, vii. p. 454. Foxe has preserved only the substance of the correspondence. Nothing more was needed; we have it already in the Gospels, and in the life of every Reformer.

to consider. A *second* element, the offspring in some measure of the revival of learning, was contributed by the Universities. The *third*, at which we are now to glance, sprang from the common people. The two former causes, operating through the Court, the nobility, and the more learned of the clergy, were in their nature conservative and moderate, and averse from unnecessary change or violence; and it was their predominance which determined the peculiar character of the English Reformation. The Government of Henry was too strong for the voice of the people to be much consulted in such a matter; hence the Reformation in this country was a sort of compromise between the religious wants and the political necessities of the time; that feature of sweeping change was wanting, which the predominant influence of the people supplied in other countries.

The panegyrists of Henry are accustomed to boast that his steady hand steered the ship of the English State through a perilous navigation, in which other Governments were miserably shipwrecked. The boast is well founded; yet there were many perplexing questions connected with a Reformation of religion which were not so much settled in Henry's reign as postponed. The wishes of the popular party of Reformers were scarcely ever consulted; and they were in consequence dissatisfied with the nature and extent of the Reformation. They may have been rash and violent in many of their proposals; but the true remedy for these faults was not to threaten with the prison and the stake, but to temper them with the caution and moderation of the other Reformers. Such a policy of conciliation was foreign to Henry's temper; a scheme of ecclesiastical reform was adopted which did not give complete satisfaction to a considerable number of the common people; the Church was from the very first weakened by internal dissensions; there

grew up within its pale a numerous and rapidly-increasing body who demanded a more thorough Reformation; in progress of time the whole nation was convulsed with the fierce struggle, and the religious controversy brought on a bloody civil war. The Church of England, indeed, down to the present day, has been affected by the legislation of Henry: and, alone of all Reformed Churches, it has never been the Church of the entire reformed nation.

The *popular* movement towards a Reformation in England may be ascribed to the labours of Wickliffe. Copies of that Reformer's works, and especially of his translation of the New Testament, were widely circulated and were greedily read in secret by assemblages of pious worshippers. It was chiefly in London and the villages of the Eastern counties that these simple students of Scripture were to be found. Longland, Bishop of Lincoln, had upwards of two hundred of them, men and women, chiefly mechanics and farm labourers, brought before him as heretics in a single visitation of his diocese. They were charged with reading heretical books, teaching the Creed and the Lord's Prayer in English, disregarding the ceremonies of the Church, eating before partaking of the sacrament, not going to church on Saints' days, and speaking with disrespect of the morals and learning of the clergy. Longland's Register[1] affords us an interesting glimpse of a widely-ramified association of Christian brethren, known to each other by a species of spiritual freemasonry, meeting by night to hear precious words of instruction from Wickliffe's gospels, or sometimes in the fields, amongst the cattle, reading to one another from tattered manuscripts, fondly preserved till they were almost worn with age. They had no advantage of any revival of letters, or any study of the school-doctors, to

[1] Largely extracted from in *Foxe*, vol. iv. 221–251.

guide them in their opinions; but in their own plain sensible way they compared the religion that existed around them with the teaching and practice of Christ and His apostles, and with the help of their rude bucolic logic they drew conclusions that would not have disgraced the most accomplished disciple of Aristotle. Thus free and unshackled by any regard for ecclesiastical traditions or scholastic propositions, they had arrived at convictions which would have startled Bilney or Latimer, almost as much as Bishop Longland. They refused to worship the crucifix, they derided pilgrimages as absurd and superstitious, they considered the Pope "the common scandal of the world," they even argued against the carnal presence of Christ in the sacrament. "Put a mouse in the Pyx," said they, with somewhat irreverent though unanswerable logic, "and then we shall see plainly whether or not the bread has been changed into the flesh and blood of the Creator of the World."[1]

The progress of the Reformation abroad naturally communicated a fresh impulse to the proceedings of these Christian brethren. London, their head-quarters, was the great centre of intercourse with the Continent; and along with the other wares imported from the Low Countries, there were clandestinely introduced many of the chief writings of the German and Swiss Reformers. The reader has not forgotten the "great baskets full of books of Lutheranism and Lollardry," which were burnt at Barnes's recantation; these, in the ordinary course of things, would have been distributed over the country by the Christian brethren, amongst whom were several enterprising agents, sufficiently skilled in German and Latin to interpret the works to their

[1] Some priests in Essex, it seems, tried the experiment, on which Longland ordered one of them to be burnt.

humbler associates. In the same year, 1526, copies of Tyndale's New Testament began to find their way into England, notwithstanding all the precautions of the authorities; and the circulation of this all-important work became henceforward the main object of the Christian colporteurs, as it was also the chief instrument in promoting the Reformation among the common people of England.

All efforts on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities to suppress the book and undermine its influence were vain. They attempted to seize the printer; they tried to intercept the copies on their passage from Germany through the Low Countries; they denounced it as a corrupt and inaccurate translation, with thousands of errors; they condemned it as the work of "children of iniquity, blinded through extreme wickedness, who had attempted by wicked interpretations to profane the majesty of Holy Scripture, and to abuse the most holy Word of God."[1] Still, in spite of all this, Tyndale's New Testament was imported in great numbers, and was widely circulated, and eagerly read. Completely baffled by the mysterious agency at work in distributing the books, the Bishops had recourse to the common-place expedient of purchasing all the copies they could find, and publicly burning them for the edification of the faithful. It need hardly be added that this ignominious plan completely failed; the laws of political economy would not yield to episcopal manifestoes, and this extraordinary demand produced an unprecedented supply, which speedily flooded the English market with New Testaments.

In the spring of 1528, Tunstal, Bishop of London, at length succeeded in discovering the mysterious agency which had so long escaped detection, and the Bishops were startled

[1] Tunstal's *Proclamation;* Wilkins' *Concilia,* iii. 706.

at the revelations of the extent to which this dreaded leaven of heresy had infected the South of England.[1] London seemed to swarm with concealed Reformers; the villages of Essex were almost peopled by them; tradesmen, yeomen, merchants, even priests, were implicated as active in the dissemination of Lutheran doctrines. A loud note of alarm was sounded that the Church was in danger, and from this period dates the commencement of that rigorous inquisition for heretics, and that stern punishment of all who refused to recant, which form such conspicuous and unpleasant characteristics of the early history of the Reformation.

To aggravate the consternation of the Bishops, the University of Oxford, which, they had fondly flattered themselves, enjoyed a perfect immunity from all corruption of Lutheran opinions, was suddenly discovered to be a very hotbed of heresy. The Cambridge students, selected by Wolsey, and transferred to his College at Oxford, had, unknown to him, all been under the influence of Bilney's teaching; and in their new sphere they secretly disseminated around them the principles which Latimer was openly enforcing at Cambridge. They met in each other's rooms to read and expound the Epistles of St. Paul; and they were regularly supplied with the works of the Continental Reformers. For upwards of two years, through the prudence and caution of Clarke, their procedings escaped suspicion; but in the spring of 1528, either through treachery, or through the indiscreet magnitude of the importation of prohibited books, the secret became known to Wolsey, and summary measures were at once adopted to free the University from this foul blot on its reputed orthodoxy. A whole library of heretical books, it was discovered, had been industriously circulated almost under the eyes of the unsuspecting Heads

[1] See Strype's *Ecc. Mem.*, I., i. p. 113, &c.; ii. p. 50, &c.

of Houses, including, in addition to Tyndale's New Testament, treatises by Huss, Wickliffe, Luther, Lambert, Zwingle, Melancthon, and Ecolampadius. The infection was not confined to a few rash undergraduates; but, as the Warden of New College pathetically lamented,[1] those implicated were numerous, and among the "most towardly young men in the University." The authorities were almost as much ashamed as alarmed; and Wolsey was excessively chagrined at this outbreak of heresy in that magnificent foundation which was the pride of his life, and among the very students for whose presence he was responsible. The ringleaders were, therefore, seized and imprisoned; some escaped, and fled to the Continent; Clarke died from the effects of his confinement in an unhealthy prison; the others recanted, and, like Barnes, were exhibited in ignominious parade in the High Street of Oxford, and were then formally absolved, and received again into communion with the Church.

This weakness of the Reformers in the hour of trial forms a noticeable and by no means an admirable feature in the early history of the Reformation in England. Hitherto no one had faced danger without flinching; and those who were generally recognised as the leaders of the movement, and who should have shown to their followers an example of courage and intrepidity, had abandoned their cause when death seemed to menace them, and had sought safety in a cowardly recantation. The Bishops' Registers of this period are full of abjurations, couched in terms of servile timidity, which it is pitiful to read;[2] and had the

[1] Letter to the Bishop of Lincoln, State Paper Office. The whole occurrence can fortunately be read in the letters of contemporaries. See *Froude*, vol. ii.; *Foxe*, vol. v. p. 421; and Appendix to Townsend's *Foxe*.

[2] See especially Garret's letter to Wolsey, in the Appendix to Townsend's *Foxe*, vol. v.

cause been an ordinary human cause, and not the cause of God and of truth, its success might well have been despaired of. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the comparatively clement policy of Wolsey and Tunstal, whose chief object was to induce the Reformers to recant, was not really more dangerous to the progress of the Reformation than the sanguinary cruelty of their successors, More and Stokesley. The stake and the rack sometimes evoked courage; and at all events the faith that braved the fire threw a lustre upon the cause in which the martyr died; but the ignominy and shame of public recantation brought a shade over the truths which were thus deserted as of less importance than life, and sadly perplexed the bewildered disciples who were abandoned by the guides whom they had followed.

In the spring of 1527, Bilney left Latimer in Cambridge, and proceeded on a sort of missionary expedition to the East of England. He preached in various churches in London (for the Reformation had friends among the clergy of the metropolis); in Willesden, Chelsea, and Kensington, then pleasant suburban villages; in Ipswich, and in various parts of his native diocese of Norwich.[1] He condemned the worship of images, the adoration of the Virgin, and pilgrimages to the shrines of the saints; and proclaimed to his hearers the great doctrine of the mediation of Christ, which had been to him the peace and life of his soul. For these offences he was arrested, and after a short imprisonment was brought before Wolsey at Westminster (November, 1527). The Cardinal at once recognised him, and charged him with violating his oath of the previous year not to teach any Lutheran doctrines. Bilney urged in defence the wretched quibble that the oath was not binding because it had not been administered "judicially," but in a private

[1] Tunstal's *Register.*

examination; and he was compelled again to swear that he would answer this time "plainly and without craft"—a terrible insinuation against the uprightness of his character. He defended himself with great ability; and, in the vain hope that he could influence Tunstal, he addressed to him some letters detailing his spiritual experience, with a simple pathos that might have melted a heart of stone.[1] But all was unavailing; Tunstal had discovered signs of weakness in Bilney, and resolved to work on his fears. Thrice he refused to recant; but at length he was overpersuaded by some friends, and abjured and submitted to the Church. On December 8, 1527, he stood where Barnes had stood before, bareheaded, and bearing a faggot, listening with feelings of shame and remorse while the preacher exulted in this fresh triumph of the Church over heresy. After this humiliating penance he was imprisoned for a year, and in the beginning of 1529 he again rejoined Latimer at Cambridge.

For some time after his return Bilney was inconsolable. He feared that he had committed the unpardonable sin. "Nothing did him any good. His friends were with him day and night, and comforted him as well as they could, but no comforts would serve. And as for the comfortable places of Scripture, to bring them unto him, it was as though a man should run him through the heart with a sword, for he thought that the whole Scriptures were against him, and sounded to his condemnation."[2] By degrees, however, Latimer induced him to return to his former duties, and with them his spiritual strength revived. Again the two fast friends were to be seen walking in close solemn converse along the "Heretics' Hill." Again they

[1] See them in *Foxe*, vol. iv. 632.
[2] Latimer's *Sermons*, vol. i. p. 222; vol. ii. p. 51.

stood by the sick bed, and taught in the prison, comforting the dying, and reclaiming the lost. Hope and confidence began again to brighten the disconsolate heart of Bilney; and, as in the case of the fallen Hebrew champion when his hair began to grow in the prison-house of Gaza, there sprang up in his soul a deep-rooted resolution to wipe away the memory of his former weakness, and, with God's help, to show that he was not ashamed of the great truths which he had so long preached. Bilney was especially interested in one unhappy prisoner, a woman accused of murdering her child, but who resolutely denied the crime. Neither his persuasions, however, nor Latimer's, could induce her to acknowledge herself guilty; and the more they reasoned with her, the more they felt assured of her innocence.[1] They determined to use every effort to procure her pardon; and quite unexpectedly a strange concurrence of circumstances brought Latimer to Court, and enabled him to accomplish his purpose. But the incidents of this period must be narrated with greater detail; they formed an important epoch in Latimer's life, terminating his connection with the University, and introducing him at last to his true position as one of the great leaders of the public opinion of his day.

On Sunday, December 19, 1529, Latimer preached in St. Edward's Church two sermons which again filled the University with strife and debate, and which still retain a species of nominal fame in English literature. These were the famous "Sermons on the Card;" and their importance demands that some attempt should be made to give the reader an idea of their contents.

The text, taken from the Gospel for the day, was the question of the Pharisees to the Baptist, "Who art thou?"

[1] Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 335.

The same question, the preacher said, every one of his hearers might ask themselves, and if they answered honestly, the reply would be in every case, "Of myself I am the child of the ire and indignation of God, a lump of sin." This was the condition of every man as he entered the world; but Christ had come to redeem and restore man, so that now every one could return a joyful answer to the question and say, "I am a Christian man, a child of everlasting joy through the merits of the bitter passion of Christ." Next came another question to be considered—if men were Christians, what was it expected by Christ that Christians should do? In few words, He expected them to follow His rule, as the Augustinian friars followed St. Augustine's rule. This was a large subject, however, and required much elucidation, and the preacher proposed to explain it on that occasion by dealing out to them "*Christ's cards.*"

It was the custom of the time to "celebrate Christmas in playing at cards;" and he proposed to explain to his hearers how they might play with Christ's cards so as to be winners and not losers. The first card was this: "Ye have heard what was spoken to them of the old law, 'thou shalt not kill, whoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment;' but I say unto you of the new law, that whosoever is angry with his neighbour shall be in danger of judgment, and whosoever shall say unto his neighbour Raca, that is to say 'brainless,' or any other like word of rebuking, shall be in danger of council; and whosoever shall say unto his neighbour 'fool,' shall be in danger of hell-fire." The preacher then proceeds to explain the meaning of this card. Men thought it sufficient not to kill with any material weapon as a sword or dagger; but Christ's rule required them not to kill by angry words and looks,

or by cherishing hatred and envy in the heart. When, therefore, angry passions rose up in our hearts, and threatened to rule over us, and to excite us against our neighbours, we should call to remembrance that we are Christian men; we should take up this card with Christ's rule upon it, and laying it on our heart, we should then have won the game. There were many ways of killing; if fathers and mothers, and masters, were to give way to angry passions, and indulge in malice, and impatience, and bitter words, then what could be expected in children and servants but to follow the example thus set before them? But men might also be killed through silence; if masters and fathers suffered their children and apprentices to cheat, or do any wrong without correcting them, they were "killing their children and servants, and should go to hell for so doing." Thus there were many ways of breaking Christ's rule, and many Christians, not understanding this card aright, were likely to be great losers.

In the same way Latimer explained what was meant by Christ's second card: "When thou makest thine oblation at mine altar, and there dost remember that thy neighbour hath anything against thee, lay down there thy oblation, and go first and reconcile thy neighbour, and then come and offer thy oblation." This was another card often misunderstood and badly played. Men provoked and injured one another, and forgot that God required them, before even coming to worship Him, to go and do what lay in them to bring their neighbours back into charity and love. And, indeed, as Latimer looked around him at the worship everywhere offered to God, he saw nothing but a systematic and gigantic violation of this great rule of Christ; men everywhere substituting sacrifice for obedience, the Church even teaching her children to compound for the open violation and neglect

of God's laws by exhibitions of extraordinary voluntary piety. And this sight, that had often before grieved his heart, drew from him the eloquent peroration of his sermons.

"Evermore bestow the greatest part of thy goods in works of mercy, and the less part in voluntary works. Voluntary works be called all manner of offering in the Church, except your four offering-days,[1] and your tithes; setting up candles, gilding and painting, building of churches, giving of ornaments, going on pilgrimages, making of highways, and such other, be called voluntary works, which works be of themselves marvellous good, and convenient to be done. Necessary works are called the commandments, the four offering-days, your tithes, and such other that belong to the commandments; and works of mercy consist in relieving and visiting thy poor neighbours. Now then, if men be so foolish of themselves that they will bestow the most part of their goods in voluntary works, which they be not bound to keep, but willingly and by their devotion, and leave the necessary works undone which they are bound to do, they and all their voluntary works are like to go unto everlasting damnation. And I promise you, if you build a hundred churches, give as much as you can make to the gilding of saints and honouring of the church, and if thou go as many pilgrimages as thy body can well suffer, and offer as great candles as oaks; if thou leave the works of mercy and the commandments undone, these works shall nothing avail thee. No doubt the voluntary works be good, and ought to be done; but yet they must be so done that by their occasion the necessary works, and the works of mercy, be not decayed and forgotten. If you will build a glorious church unto God, see first yourselves to be in charity with your neighbours, and suffer not them to be offended by your works. Then, when ye come into your parish church, you bring with you the holy temple of God. Again, if you list to gild and paint Christ in your churches, and honour him in vestments, see that before your eyes the poor people die not for lack of meat, drink, and clothing. Then do you deck the very true temple of God, and honour Him in rich vestures that will never be worn, and so forth use yourselves, according unto the commandments; and then, finally, set up your candles, and they will report what a glorious light remaineth in your hearts, for it is not fitting to see a dead man light

[1] Christmas, Easter, Whitsunday, and the feast of the patron saint of the Church.

candles. Then, I say, go your pilgrimages, build your material churches, do all your voluntary works; and they will then represent you unto God, and testify with you, that you have provided Him a glorious place in your hearts."

Whatever may be thought of the preacher's somewhat unusual device to attract the attention of his hearers, there can be but one opinion as to the soundness of his teaching, and the eminently practical value of the duties which he enforced. The vulgarity and violence which have been sometimes ignorantly ascribed to Latimer, are nowhere to be found in these sermons; indeed, they are nowhere to be found in his writings. He does not even enter into those doctrinal controversies which we usually associate with the preaching of a Reformer, for to him the Reformation was not so much the revival of old scriptural truth long concealed, as the restoration of an old scriptural life that had been almost totally obscured by ceremonies and ecclesiastical superstitions. To a modern reader the sermons may seem common-place enough; the duty of preferring obedience to sacrifice, the plain commands of God to voluntary exhibitions of religious zeal, is sufficiently recognised, in words at least, among us; and we are therefore at a loss to imagine that Latimer's preaching could have excited any special attention, much less that it could have provoked a fierce controversy. But the champions of the Church would not allow a single stone of their edifice to be touched with impunity; all was sacred, and no impious hand must be raised against it. To cut off the offerings was to abridge the revenues of the clergy, and any such proposal must therefore be resisted to the last.

It was felt by Latimer's opponents that his sermons, with their homely illustrations, were a great *hit;* they took the public fancy, and, unless speedily answered, they were likely

to spread far and wide the contagion of heretical doctrines. It was resolved, therefore, to answer them in the same vein; and Buckenham, Prior of the Dominican friars, appeared as the champion of the old orthodoxy against the attacks of Latimer. The most offensive feature in Latimer's sermons had been the tacit assumption that all ought to have free permission to read Holy Scriptures for themselves; and this was the position which Buckenham was most anxious to overthrow. Latimer had dealt out *Christmas cards* to his audience; Buckenham proposed to teach them the game of *Christmas dice*, and to show them how to cast *cinque* and *quatre* to the confusion of Latimer's Lutheran opinions. The *quatre* were the four doctors of the Church (St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and St. Gregory), who were assumed to be opposed to the free circulation of the Scriptures in the vernacular; and by *cinque* were meant five passages in the New Testament, from which he attempted to show that the reading of Scripture by the common people was inexpedient and pre-eminently dangerous to society. For Scripture, he said, was full of figurative language, which the uneducated would assuredly misunderstand to their own ruin. "Thus," he asked, with a smile of triumph, "where Scripture saith, 'No man that layeth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is meet for the kingdom of God,' will not the ploughman, when he readeth these words, be apt forthwith to cease from his plough, and then where will be the sowing and harvest? Likewise, also, whereas the baker readeth, 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,' will he not forthwith be too sparing in the use of leaven, to the great injury of our health? And so, also, when the simple man reads the words, 'If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee,' incontinent he will pluck out his eyes, and so the whole realm will be

full of blind men, to the great decay of the nation, and the manifest loss of the King's grace. And thus by reading of Holy Scriptures will the whole kingdom come in confusion; so when Master Latimer deals out his cards, we cast our *cinque-quatre* upon them, and lo! we have won the game."

The prior's wit was not the most brilliant in the world, and it was, therefore, not a very difficult task for a man of Latimer's ready humour to overwhelm him with ridicule. The baker and the ploughman, Latimer replied, might be safely trusted, notwithstanding the occasional occurrence of figurative expressions, to read the Scriptures in their native language; at least, it would be time enough to prohibit them when such dangerous consequences as Buckenham had predicted were actually found to occur. The figures of Scripture were not very mysterious of comprehension; moreover, added he, figures are not confined to Scripture; "every speech hath its metaphors, so common and vulgar to all men, that the very painters do paint them on walls and in houses. As for example" [and here he looked straight at Buckenham], "when they paint a fox preaching out of a friar's cowl, none is so mad as to take this to be a fox that preacheth, but know well enough the meaning of the matter, which is to paint out unto us what hypocrisy, craft, and dissimulation, lie hid many times in these friars' cowls, willing us thereby to beware of them."

The prior was extinguished for the time amid universal laughter; and other opponents fared equally ill in contest with Latimer's keen trenchant sarcasm. The controversy, however, only waxed the louder and fiercer, St. John's College being especially bitter against Latimer; and the University was again involved in a hot warfare. The truth is, other elements of rancour had been imported into the

controversy, and the mimic academic warfare was merely an isolated fragment of that struggle which had arrayed all England in two hostile camps. An unexpected peacemaker at length intervened; and the following letter, which terminated the University hostilities, will naturally introduce us to a brief survey of that all-engrossing theme which, besides many other important results, was the means of bringing Latimer before the eyes of the whole nation.

From Dr. Edward Fox (the Royal Almoner), to the Vice-Chancellor (Dr. Buckmaster).[1]

"It hath been greatly complained unto the King's highness of the shameful contentions used now of late between Mr. Latimer and certain of St. John's College,[2] insomuch His Grace intendeth to set some order therein, which should not be greatly to yours and others the Heads of the Universities' worship. . . . It is not unlikely but that they of St. John's proceedeth of some private malice towards Mr. Latimer, and that also they be animated so to do by their master, Mr. Watson, and such other my Lord of Rochester's friends" [Fisher, Bishop of Rochester]. "Which malice also, peradventure, cometh partly for that *Mr. Latimer favoureth the King's cause;* and I assure you it is so reported to the King. And contrary, peradventure, Mr. Latimer being by them exasperated is more vehement than becometh the very evangelist of Christ, and *de industriâ* speaketh in his sermons certain *paradoxa* to offend and slander the people; which I assure you in my mind is neither wisely done as things are now, nor like a Godly evangelist. Ye shall therefore, in my opinion, do well to command both of them to silence, and that neither of them from henceforth preach until ye know further of the King's pleasure.

"At London, 24th January (1530)."

On the receipt of this imperative missive, the Vice-Chancellor took steps to compose the strife which was raging so fiercely in the University. He appointed a day

[1] Lamb's *Original Documents*, etc., from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, p. 14.

[2] Bayn, Rud, Greenwood, Proctor, and Brigenden, all of St. John's, were among Latimer's bitterest opponents.

on which Latimer's opponents were to bring forward publicly any accusation that they wished to lay against him. No one having appeared, the Vice-Chancellor summoned a meeting of the senate (January 29, 1530), placed all the parties before him, and conjured them, as they feared the King's displeasure, no longer to disturb the peace of the University with their debates. Latimer was enjoined, under penalty of excommunication, "to touch no such things in the pulpit as had been in controversy between him and others;" and was besides warned "to be circumspect and discreet in his sermons, and speak no such thing as might be occasion of offence" to his audience. His opponents, Greenwood, Brigenden, Bayn, and others, were at the same time reminded that Latimer had satisfactorily explained all the articles imputed to him, and they were accordingly admonished, under pain of excommunication, to be silent in time to come.[1]

Thus peace was for the time restored to the University on one subject which had been drawn into debate; but the other great question, "*the King's cause*," as Fox styles it in his letter, continued to be discussed with the fiercest animosity in Cambridge and over all England. This was, of course, the great question of Henry's divorce from Catherine; a question destined to be pregnant with the most momentous results. Into all the intricacies of this perplexing subject it would be foreign for this biography to enter; but some brief notice of its progress is indispensable to the right understanding of this period of Latimer's life.

To some minds the subject of Henry's divorce presents no difficulties. They consider Henry as a profligate wretch, a perfect monster in human shape, and they believe that there never was any other reason for the divorce except the

[1] Lamb's *Documents*, etc., p. 16.

passion of a dissolute king for a younger and fairer woman than his wife. This theory is a very simple one, and certainly Henry's greatest admirers must admit that his relations with his numerous queens stand considerably in need of explanation and defence; still there are other facts concerning the divorce of which history is bound to take cognisance. It is certain, for example, that up to this period Henry's life had not been one of profligacy; he had not been blameless, indeed, but the theory which represents him as a lawless debauchee has very little confirmation in fact. It is also certain that in 1526 the French ambassadors threw out doubts as to the validity of his marriage, and the consequent legitimacy of his daughter Mary; and as the succession to the throne was thus brought into dispute, and England menaced with a civil war, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Henry, if he never doubted before, now began to ask himself whether his marriage was not condemned by the law of God. And if he turned to Scripture for the resolution of the difficulties thus excited in his mind, his conscience would be made still more uneasy; for the very curse pronounced in Leviticus, "they shall be childless," seemed to have fallen upon his house; of many children only one survived, and she a female, whose legitimacy was questioned by foreign sovereigns. These were the reasons assigned by Henry himself for moving in the divorce, and it seems impossible to set them aside as altogether idle pretexts. Even, therefore, if Ann Boleyn had not appeared on the scene, it seems likely that the question would still have arisen. Moreover, Catherine always affirmed that Wolsey's eager desire for revenge upon the Emperor for his perfidy, prompted him to suggest to Henry that his marriage was sinful, that he might thus wound Charles through his aunt; and if any weight is to be

attached to this suspicion, it will confirm the theory that the divorce was a question independent of Henry's passion for Ann Boleyn, for Wolsey would never have recommended such a step in order to promote her marriage to Henry. There can be no doubt, however, that other reasons contributed to stimulate Henry's anxiety for a divorce. Catherine was considerably older than her husband; she had lost her personal attractions; she was dull and heavy, and Henry needed amusement and loved sprightliness; and Ann Boleyn, young, fair, full of glee and lively spirits, had made a deep impression upon his affections. The early history of Ann is still somewhat involved in obscurity, but it seems placed beyond doubt that Henry had seen and admired her some years before the divorce was mooted; and when the possibility of a divorce was suggested, his thoughts would naturally turn to her as the successor to his discarded queen.

The divorce, however, required the Papal sanction. Henry accordingly submitted to Clement VII. the question of the lawfulness of his marriage, in the confident expectation of a speedy cancelling of his wedlock, and free permission to select another spouse. His arguments he believed to be unanswerable: his present marriage was forbidden by the law of God; his conscience was opposed to it; the peace of the country was endangered by the want of heirs to the crown; he was, moreover, an obedient son of the Church; he had given no countenance to heresy; he had written against Luther; he was a powerful monarch whom it was dangerous to disoblige; and Henry, therefore, saw no reason to doubt the Pope's compliance. But the unhappy Pope was placed in a cruel dilemma by Henry's request. He admitted the substantial justice of Henry's cause; but he feared to offend the Emperor by declaring

his aunt's marriage sinful. The Pope was at the time absolutely at the Emperor's mercy. Rome had been taken and sacked (May, 1527) by the imperial troops; and the Pontiff, in his retirement at Orvieto, was virtually a prisoner completely in the Emperor's power. For years the wretched man—the Vicar of Christ, as he called himself—endeavoured to avoid any open breach with either of the two monarchs, and vainly sought by diplomacy and intrigue to find some outlet from the difficulty that enclosed him on all sides. He hoped that Henry's passion might cool by delay; he attempted to induce Catherine to retire into a nunnery; he suggested that Henry might be allowed to have two wives. To please Henry he sent bulls and missives into England, but they were always found deficient in some point of prime importance. All was in vain: the Emperor was displeased at the case being entertained at all; Henry was indignant at the slight thrown upon himself, and the injury done to the justice of his cause. The nation began to murmur at what seemed an insult to the national independence. Henry threatened the Pope with the possible estrangement of England from the Papal see; and Wolsey, apprehensive of his sovereign's anger, urged Clement to come to some decision. Thus solicited, the Pope seemed to take the necessary steps for settling the question. A commission was granted to two legates, Campeggio and Wolsey, to decide the legality of Henry's marriage. Every artifice, however, was used to delay the sitting of the tribunal. Campeggio was appointed in April, 1528, but it was June, 1529, before he actually sat on that memorable trial, familiar to all English people from Shakspere's words. Nothing was decided; on an absurd pretext the court was adjourned till October, and never met again. The Italian Proteus was not to be held fast by mere English main force. The

Queen appealed to Rome, as it was intended she should do; His Holiness immediately avocated the cause to his own courts, and everything had to be begun again *de novo*.

This last successful stroke of diplomatic finesse proved too much for Henry's temper. Hitherto he had waited with exemplary patience the Pope's decision on his case; now the divorce entered on a new phase. His marriage with Catherine had been originally sanctioned by a Papal dispensation. It was admitted by all that the Pope could dispense with any regulations merely ecclesiastical; it was no ecclesiastical ordinance, however, but a divine law, which prohibited marriage with a deceased brother's wife, and it was now asked "had the Pope authority to dispense with the laws of God? Was not Henry's marriage null and void all along as proceeding upon a dispensation which it was beyond the Pope's prerogative to grant?" Of this new question the Pope manifestly could not be the judge, for he was a party interested in the decision; some other tribunal must determine it. A general council, had it been possible to summon one, would have been the most fitting court to try such a question; failing that, various other schemes, more or less unsatisfactory, were suggested. At last, however, the right man to cope with the emergency was found. In the autumn of 1529, Henry had left London to avoid the plague, and was residing at Waltham. His attendants were quartered in some of the neighbouring houses, and there Fox and Gardiner met Thomas Cranmer, a Cambridge scholar, who had thought much on the King's case, and seemed to himself to see a clear way out of all its intricacies. "Why not submit the case," he said, "to the Universities of Christendom? If they should decide that the marriage was contrary to the Divine law, and beyond the power of a Papal dispensation, then the King

might contract a second marriage without waiting for any sanction from Rome." The suggestion was reported to Henry, who at once saw that it was practicable, or, as he phrased it in his blunt way, "Cranmer had the sow by the right ear." Cranmer was appointed one of the Royal chaplains, and drew up a statement of the "King's cause," which was submitted by accredited agents to the chief foreign Universities.[1] In a few months the Universities of Paris, Orleans, Anjou, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Padua, and Bologna, decided that marriage with a deceased brother's wife was "*contra jus divinum et naturale*," and that the Pope, even though "entrusted with the keys of the kingdom of heaven," could not grant a dispensation in such a case. It is beyond doubt that bribery and intimidation were to some extent employed in procuring the favourable verdict, but as the Holy Infallible See itself was acting under the same influences, it seems hard and unfair for historians to pour out the vials of their virtuous indignation on a mere fallible layman like Henry, for having recourse to base means of persuasion.[2]

The English Universities also were consulted on the weighty question; and opinion was by no means decidedly in Henry's favour in those seats of learning. At Oxford, the younger masters were so refractory that Henry gave them a very plain hint that if they insisted on "playing masteries, they should soon perceive that it was not wise

[1] It has been objected to this story, told by Fuller and others, that the University of Orleans decided in Henry's favour, April 5, 1529, and that, therefore, Cranmer's advice, given in the autumn of 1529, could not have been the motive that induced Henry to consult the Universities. But the objection is founded on ignorance; in France the ecclesiastical year was reckoned from Easter; and in 1530 Easter fell on April 17, so that April 5, 1529, of the decision, means April 5, 1530, of ordinary reckoning. Moreover, it may be asked, how do the objectors explain Cranmer's sudden advancement, if they reject the common account?

[2] See Croke's *Letter in Burnet*, iv. 135; and *Froude*, vol. ii.

to stir up a hornet's nest (*quod non bonum esset irritare crabrones*)."[1] In fact, measures almost amounting to personal intimidation were employed before the University could be induced to decide in Henry's favour.[2] At Cambridge the opposition was equally determined; but, partly perhaps because Cranmer was a Cambridge man, Henry had an able body of advocates, of whom Crome, Shaxton, and Latimer, were the chief. On February 15, 1530, just as the disturbance occasioned by the Sermons on the Cards was dying down, the Vice-Chancellor was requested to submit to the University the question whether marriage with a deceased brother's wife was prohibited by the law of God. The request was accompanied by sundry hints not difficult to interpret, of Henry's favour to the University in times past, and his confidence that they would decide so as to gratify him. The decision, it was agreed, should be referred to a committee, which included Latimer, Crome, and others among the Reformers, as well as Watson, Bayn, and some of the bitterest enemies of the Reformation; and Fox and Gardiner were to undertake the task of securing a decision in Henry's favour. But the opposition was zealous and resolute; objection was made to Latimer and others, as having already committed themselves on the question; and it seemed as if the King were to be condemned in his own realm. Gardiner, however, was determined to carry his point; after twice failing to secure a majority, he induced some of the more timid members to retire, and at length succeeded in obtaining, though with an embarrassing addition, some such decision as Henry desired.[3] Gardiner's account of the whole transaction has been preserved; and we can have little difficulty in gathering

[1] Burnet's *Records*, vol. vi. 38. [2] *State Papers*, vol. i. 377.
[3] *Burnet*, vol. iv. 130.

from it that the majority of the University were decidedly opposed to the King's request. It is not a little curious also that Gardiner's letter contains no allusion to Latimer. Salcot and Reps are mentioned as the chief defenders of the Royal cause, but not a word is written in recognition of the services of Latimer. Probably Gardiner was unwilling to bestow any praise on one whose orthodoxy was so generally suspected; but, fortunately, Henry had other less prejudiced emissaries at Cambridge. Sir William Butts, the Royal physician, a man not unknown to admirers of Shakspere and Holbein, was in the University during the debate. He at once perceived the eminent ability of Latimer; and on his return to Court he reported faithfully to Henry what he had seen and heard of the progress of his "great cause."

Latimer was accordingly invited to Windsor, where Henry was spending the Lent of 1530, sore perplexed by the difficulties of his position, and keenly feeling the want of some sagacious adviser to fill the place of the fallen Wolsey. The fame of Latimer's preaching had already reached the ears of the King, who was determined to judge for himself of the character of that eloquence which had produced such a sensation in the University of Cambridge. On the second Sunday in Lent, therefore, March 14, 1530, Latimer for the first time preached before the Court. The subject of his sermon has not been recorded; but as it was Latimer's practice "to frame his doctrine according to his audience,' we may take for granted that his discourse was no smooth collection of common-places tricked out with rhetorical art, but some plain honest exposition of Christian duty, with special reference to the peculiar duty devolving upon kings. Among his audience was the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge who had just arrived with the University decision on

Henry's question ; and to him we are indebted for an exceedingly graphic and frank description of the whole occurrence.

"On the second Sunday in Lent, at afternoon, I came to Windsor, and also to part of Mr. Latimer's sermon ; and after the end of the same, I spake with Mr. Secretary (Gardiner), and also with Mr. Provost (Fox), and so at after even-song, I delivered our letters in the chamber of presence, all the Court beholding. His Highness gave me there great thanks, and talked with me a good while. He much lauded our wisdoms and good conveyance in the matter, with the great quietness in the same. He showed me also what he had in his hands for our University" [some reward to recompense them for a favourable decision]. "So he departed" [went to speak to some others in the room]. "But by-and-by *he greatly praised Mr. Latimer's sermon*, and in so praising said in this wise—this displeaseth greatly Mr. Vice-Chancellor yonder. Yon same, said he unto the Duke of Norfolk, is Mr. Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, and so pointed unto me. Then he spake secretly unto the said duke, which, after the King's departure, came unto me, and welcomed me, saying, amongst other things, that the King would speak with me on the next day : and here is the first act.

"On the next day, I waited until it was dinner time" [no one taking any notice of him]; "and so at the last Dr. Butt came unto me, and brought a reward, twenty nobles for me, and five marks for the younger proctor which was with me, saying that I should take that for a resolute answer" [*i.e.*, for an answer that should really decide the question submitted to them, and not evade it, as had been done at Cambridge], "and that I might depart from the Court when I would. Then came Mr. Provost, and when I had showed him of the answer, he said I should speak unto the King at after dinner for all that, and so brought me into a privy place, where as he would have me to wait. At after dinner I came thither and he both, and by one of the clock the King entered in. It was in a gallery. There were Mr. Secretary, Mr. Provost, *Mr. Latimer*, Mr. Proctor, and I, and no more ; the King there talked with us until six of the clock. I assure you, he was scarce contented with Mr. Secretary, and Mr. Provost, that this was not also determined, *An papa possit dispensare*" [whether the Pope could grant a dispensation for a marriage that was contrary to the Divine law], "I made the best [excuse], and confirmed the same that they had showed His Grace before, and how it could never have been so obtained. Then His Highness departed, and I shortly after

took my leave of Mr. Secretary and Mr. Provost, with whom I did not drink, nor yet was bidden; and on the morrow departed from thence, thinking more than I did say, and being glad that I was out of the Court.

"Mr. Latimer preacheth still, *quod æmuli ejus graviter ferunt*" [to the great annoyance of his opponents].

The Vice-Chancellor's letter[1] is dated "the day after Palm Sunday," *i.e.*, April 12, and from this it appears probable that Latimer had produced such a favourable impression upon Henry as to have been kept at Windsor during the whole of Lent, and that he had perhaps preached again before the Court. It was Latimer's first appearance at Court, his first entrance on that wider sphere of action where he was afterwards to play so distinguished a part; and though he again returned for a brief sojourn to the University, it was impossible, in the struggle that was at hand, that a preacher of his ability could be left in the comparative seclusion of Cambridge. It may have been on this occasion that Ann Boleyn first saw and heard one who had so effectually served her cause, and gratitude may not unnaturally have prepossessed her in his favour; it is well known, however, that she entertained a high esteem for Latimer, and that her patronage subsequently secured his elevation to a bishopric, a kindness for which she was amply repaid, if his words in any way contributed to lead her to a better knowledge of the truth.

A first sermon before the sovereign is too important an epoch in any one's life to be readily forgotten, and various circumstances concurred to impress it on Latimer's memory. The reader will remember the unfortunate prisoner in whose fate Latimer and Bilney were so deeply interested just as the storm of controversy began to rage at Cambridge. The summons to Windsor would, no doubt, appear

[1] Lamb's *Original Documents.*

to them, at such a crisis, as a special interposition of Divine favour; and Latimer was not slow to avail himself of the opportunity so unexpectedly afforded him. "I was called to preach before the King," he says, in subsequently relating the occurrence, "which was my first sermon that I made before His Majesty, and it was done at Windsor; where His Majesty, after the sermon was done, did most familiarly talk with me in a gallery. Now, when I saw my time, I kneeled down before His Majesty, opening the whole matter [about the prisoner]; and afterwards most humbly desired His Majesty to pardon that woman. The King most graciously heard my humble request, insomuch that I had a pardon ready for her at my return homewards."[1]

Henry's approbation of Latimer's sermons was not confined to words; the preacher's services were handsomely recompensed, as the following entry shows:—

"Item the 16th day [of March, 1530], paied to Maister Latymer, that preched bifore the King the ijde Sunday of Lent. . . v. li."[2]

Five pounds in Henry's time was equivalent to £75 of our money, and was no unsuitable *honorarium* for a monarch to bestow, or for a preacher of eminence to receive.

The reader, who has perhaps been accustomed to think of Henry as a despot armed with absolute power, whose will it was impossible to resist, must have read with some surprise the account of the resolute and powerful opposition made by the two English Universities to any decision in his favour in the important matter of his divorce. At any other time the question of the divorce might have received from the Pope and the Church a fair and impartial consideration; and it is by no means certain, "according to the principles of the canon law, that the

[1] Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 335.
[2] Sir H. Nicholas' *Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VIII.*

merits of the process were against Henry."[1] But at such a period, when a Reformation was in progress, Churchmen felt that a decision which should condemn the conduct of a deceased Pope, and limit the Pope's dispensing power, was in reality a serious blow to the authority and infallibility of the Papal See. Hence proceeded the determined opposition in the English Universities, where of course the influence of the Church was all-powerful: Henry's proposal seemed to them to be the thin end of the wedge, which might lead the way to the introduction of other Reformed opinions and practices, and therefore they used every effort to refer the decision absolutely to the reigning Pontiff.

This opposition brought on the crisis of which Wolsey had so often in vain warned Clement. Henry was the most orthodox of Catholics; none of his titles pleased him half so well as that of "Defender of the Faith;" but he was determined to be absolute and supreme ruler in his own dominions, and would no longer submit to be exhibited before his subjects as struggling in vain against the power of a foreign ecclesiastic. The departure of Campeggio in the autumn of 1529 was the signal for Wolsey's ruin. "The hand that made him could unmake him when it listed." The Cardinal was immediately indicted for procuring Bulls from Rome, in contravention of the Statute of Provisors. He might have pleaded in defence the King's express licence for what he had done, but he knew Henry's temper too well; he threw himself upon the royal clemency, acknowledged his guilt, and surrendered all his treasures. Sir Thomas More, a layman, was elevated to the Chancellorship, an ominous token of the coming downfall of the

[1] Hallam's *Constitutional History*, i. 61. 12mo. edition.

ecclesiastical power; and a Parliament was summoned, the first for more than six years. The Parliament assembled in the beginning of November, 1529, and speedily evinced the spirit by which it was animated. The Commons complained loudly of the intolerable grievances inflicted by the clergy upon the people, of the monstrous fees extorted in the Bishops' Courts for the Probates of Wills, of the shameful exaction of Mortuaries[1] even from the poorest, and of the gross negligence of the clergy who left their cures to busy themselves in secular pursuits. These were not the exaggerated complaints of Protestants looking at the Church through the medium of hostile prejudices; they were the same old grievances which Bishops and ecclesiastical courts had for ages condemned, and had in vain attempted to remedy.[2] The Spiritual Peers in the House of Lords, those who derived their wealth from these abuses, were of course indignant at the complaints of the Commons; they "frowned and grunted," says the blunt old chronicler of the period, "and spoke of heresy and the Church in danger;" but the King was determined, the Commons were resolute, and measures were passed to limit the extortion of the clergy. Lest, however, it should be supposed that these proceedings sprang from any sympathy with the opinions of the Reformers, Henry issued a proclamation in December, ordering all heretical books, and especially the English New Testament, to be delivered up, and empowering the Bishops to use all diligence in arresting the progress of heresy, by seizing all suspected persons, and handing over the guilty and relapsed to the civil power for condign punishment.

[1] *i.e.*, dues claimed by the priests on the death of parishioners.

[2] See Warham's canons in Wilkin's *Concilia*, iii. 717.

The measures of Parliament, indicating a manifest determination to withstand the proud claims of the Church, were hailed with the utmost satisfaction by the many secret friends of the Reformation in England. Even Henry's proclamation did not altogether damp and overthrow their hopes; they believed that the King was secretly with them, and that he would not seriously enforce the prohibition against the free circulation of the English Bible. Everywhere it was whispered that the "King's grace *would* that they should have their books, and that ere Michaelmas the majority in the country would adhere to them."[1] Thus this matter of the free circulation of what were styled "heretical books" had become one of the great questions of the day, and Henry resolved to be regulated in the decision of it by the wisdom of his Universities. On May 4, accordingly, he again wrote to the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, intimating that he wished to summon the best learned men of the realm to examine the contents of the numerous books on religious subjects that were so widely circulated in England, "that they might reprove what was erroneous and seditious, and approve what was good and fruitful."[2] Twelve Cambridge men learned in divinity were to be selected and sent to London, to assist in deciding these important questions; the same number were selected from Oxford; and Henry himself nominated several others of eminence to assist in the deliberations. It is a proof of the prominent position in the University which Latimer had now reached that he was chosen at once as one of the twelve delegates from Cambridge.

[1] Letter of Bishop Nix to Warham, May 14, 1530; *Anderson's Annals*, i. 256.
[2] Lamb's *Original Documents, &c.*, p. 24.

No record has been preserved of the deliberations of this assembly; but with such men as Sir Thomas More, Gardiner, and Tunstal on the one side, and Latimer, Crome, and the famous scholar William Latimer,[1] on the other, there would be no lack of able theological discussion. All were invited to state their opinions frankly. "Holy Scripture was declared, holy doctors and authors were alleged and read, and all things which might on both sides be spoken and brought forward, were said."[2] Finally, after a busy session of twelve days, the conference closed its labours in the presence of Henry, in a solemn meeting in St. Edward's chamber at Westminster Palace. The Reformers had been completely outnumbered; the works of Tyndale were condemned as full of "great errors and pestilent heresies;" the New Testament in English was especially singled out for censure, and its use was forbidden. That there might be no misunderstanding of the King's intentions, a Royal proclamation was issued against these heretical books; and the clergy were compelled to read from their pulpits a declaration, exhorting their flocks to "expel and purge from their breasts all contagious doctrine and pestiferous traditions," which they might have received from reading the New Testament in English! that so they might be "apt to receive the true doctrine and understanding of Christ's laws to the edification of their souls." To add humiliation to defeat, Latimer's name was appended with the others to the proclamation as sanctioning a sentence which he had all along opposed, and which he detested from the bottom of his heart.

[1] He was no relation, so far as can be ascertained, of our Reformer, though always a friend to the Reformation.

[2] "Preacher's Declaration" in *Foxe*, viii. 504.

The only ray of hope, in what must have seemed to Latimer a dark and cheerless prospect, was the solemn promise made by Henry in the conference "that he would cause the New Testament to be faithfully and purely translated into the English tongue, that it might be freely given to the people, when he saw their manner and behaviour convenient to receive the same." The promise, we may hope, was made in sincerity, and not merely as a pretext to gain time; it is certain, however, that for years no active steps were ever taken to fulfil it, and England owes her Bible not to the condescension of a king, but to the noble energy of the martyred Tyndale.

It is highly probable that Latimer spent the summer of 1530 in London. According to Foxe, he resided with Butts, the Royal physician, and preached frequently in London. The principles of the Reformation reckoned more adherents in the metropolis than in any other part of the kingdom: several of his University friends had been promoted to benefices there, and would, of course, gladly allow Latimer to officiate in their parishes; and the fact of the see being vacant during the greater part of the year, was unquestionably favourable to the labours of the reformed preacher. Tunstal, a comparatively mild and temperate prelate, had been translated to Durham, and the violent and vindictive Stokesley, the Bishop-elect, was abroad till the close of the year. Latimer and his friends, therefore, were allowed to preach unmolested; and subsequent investigation showed that their labours were not in vain—that their sermons had led not a few to find in Christ the true source of peace and life.

In September it may be conjectured (for the reason given below) that he returned once again, for the last time, to Cambridge, receiving before he set out a Royal

gift, in payment of the expenses of his journey to London. The nature of the entry, specialising Latimer alone, among all the Cambridge delegates, is a significant proof of the important position he had already reached in public estimation :—

"Sep. 18. Paied to Maister Ffoxe for that he layed oute to Maister Latymer and other scolars of Cambridge for their costs from Cambridge to London, and fro thens to Cambridge agen. ... ... VIII li."[1]

To this last visit of Latimer to Cambridge may be referred most appropriately an incident recorded by Strype. The grand occurrence of the day was the fall of the great Cardinal, who was arrested in the beginning of November on the charge of high treason. And it was not forgotten that Latimer's permission to officiate in England, in spite of the prohibition of his diocesan, had been granted by Wolsey, in the plentitude of his illegal prerogative as Papal Legate; and the enemies of the Reformer probably hoped that at length the troublesome preacher might be effectually silenced. Latimer had no such apprehensions. "Ye think that my licence decayeth with my Lord Cardinal's temporal fall," he exclaimed in one of his sermons from the University pulpit, "but I take it nothing so. For he being, I trust, reconciled to God from his pomp and vanities, I now set more by his licence than ever I did before, when he was in his most felicity." [2]

The fall of Wolsey was, indeed, an era in the history of the Church of England, and must have filled the minds of the adherents of the old religion with melancholy forebodings of coming ruin. The Cardinal had not been very popular among the clergy, he had even been accused of

[1] *i.e.* £120 of our money; *Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VIII.*
[2] Strype, *Ecc. Mem.*, III., i. 368.

remissness in the persecution of heretics, still Churchmen could not but feel the insecurity of their position when Wolsey had fallen, and could not but fear that, deprived of his powerful aid, they were less likely than ever to check the growth of those Reformed opinions, which seemed on the increase all around. Wolsey himself had begun to feel alarmed at the great progress of the Reformed doctrines in England, and his last dying charge was intended to rouse Henry to more vigour in repressing them. "Master Kingston," said he, in words that have become immortal, "I see the matter against me how it is framed; *but if I had served my God as diligently as I have done the King, He would not have given me over in my grey hairs.* I pray you with all my heart to have me most humbly commended unto his royal majesty. And say, furthermore, that I request His Grace, in God's name, that he have a vigilant eye to depress this new sect of Lutherans, that it do not increase within his dominions through his negligence, in such a sort as that he shall be fain at length to put harness on his back to subdue them." [1]

If anything were wanted to "point a moral" of the folly of human ambition, it might be found in the career of Wolsey.[2] Raised by his energy and the favour of his sovereign to a prouder eminence of dignity and power than any English subject has ever occupied, he had been, in one short year, deprived of his wealth, and state, and authority; and in all probability only escaped the scaffold by his sudden death (not without suspicion of violence) at Leicester Abbey. No monument marks the resting-place of this most magnificent of Englishmen; the mouldering

[1] Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey.*

[2] See Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*, and, better still, Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.*

remains of the monastery that overshadow his unknown and unhonoured tomb are, perhaps, the most appropriate memorial of the mighty Churchman, with whose fall the ecclesiastical supremacy of a thousand years passed into ruin. Wolsey, sleeping not in "dull, cold marble," as he anticipated, but in an undistinguished corner of a dismantled abbey—the history of England records no event more worthy of being carefully pondered. It would be beyond the scope of this biography to discuss the character and policy of the great Cardinal. He had his faults undoubtedly, grave and serious in a statesman, whose voice directed the counsels of the nation; still more so in a prelate of the Church, whose life should have been moulded by high religious principles. The Reformers, however, had soon abundant reason to regret the transference of authority from the lenient sway of Wolsey to the relentless severity of Stokesley, and the vindictive cruelty of the philosophic More. No great statesman of Henry's reign had his hands so free from the stains of bloodshed; and whatever may have been his private vices and his public errors, the biographer of Latimer, at all events, is bound by all the obligations of gratitude to let "his faults lie gently on him."

While Wolsey was on his last journey from York, Latimer was engaged in writing his noble letter to Henry, in favour of the free circulation of Holy Scriptures in the English tongue. This he looked upon as one of the most important steps towards a reformation of religion; and he had hoped, with the other English Reformers, that some effort would be made to fulfil the promise, made in the royal proclamation, of a new translation which might be freely circulated in England; but his expectations were disappointed, and there seemed no resource but in an appeal to

the conscience of Henry. And never was the King more faithfully reminded of the awful responsibilities of his office. The letter is too long to be here transcribed in full, but the following extracts sufficiently indicate its character and style :—

"The holy doctor, St. Augustine, saith, that he which for fear of any power hideth the truth, provoketh the wrath of God to come upon him, for he feareth men more than God. And the holy man, St. John Chrysostom, saith, that he is not only a traitor to the truth, which openly for truth teacheth a lie, but he also which doth not freely pronounce and show the truth which he knoweth. These sentences, most redoubted King, when I read now of late, and marked them earnestly in the inward parts of mine heart, they made me sore afraid, troubled, and vexed me grievously in my conscience, and at the last drove me to this strait, that either I must show forth such things as I have read and learned in Scripture, or else be of that sort that provoke the wrath of God upon them, and be traitors unto the truth. . . . . Alas! how little do men regard those sharp sayings of these two holy men, and how little do they fear the terrible judgment of Almighty God! And specially they which boast themselves to be guides and captains unto others, and challenge unto themselves the knowledge of holy Scripture, yet will neither show the truth themselves (as they be bound), neither suffer them that would . . . And they" [*i.e.* the bishops and clergy] "will, as much as in them lieth, debar, not only the Word of God, which David calleth 'a light to direct,' and show every man how to order his affections and lusts according to the commandments of God, but also by their subtle wiliness they instruct, move, and provoke in a manner all kings in Christendom, to aid, succour, and help them in this their mischief. And especially in this your realm they have so blinded your liege people and subjects with their laws, customs, ceremonies, and barbarous glosses, and punished them with cursings, excommunications, and other corruptions (corrections I would say). And now, at the last, when they see that they cannot prevail against the open truth (which the more it is persecuted, the more it increaseth by their tyranny) they have made it treason to your noble Grace to have the Scripture in English.

"I beseech your Grace to pardon me a while, and patiently to hear me a word or two; yea, though it be so that, as concerning your

high majesty and regal power whereunto Almighty God hath called your Grace, there is as great difference between you and me, as between God and man: for you be here to me and to all your subjects in God's stead, to defend, aid, and succour us in our right; and so I should tremble and quake to speak to your Grace. But, again, as concerning that you be a mortal man, in danger of sin, having in you the corrupt nature of Adam, in the which all we be both conceived and born; so have you no less need of the merits of Christ's passion for your salvation, than I and other of your subjects have, which be all members of the mystical body of Christ. And, although you be a higher member, yet you must not disdain the lesser. . . This, most gracious King, when I considered, and also your favourable and gentle nature, I was bold to write this rude, homely, and simple letter unto your Grace, trusting that you will accept my true and faithful mind even as it is."

Latimer then proceeds to direct Henry's attention to—

"'The life and process of our Saviour Christ and His apostles, in preaching and setting forth the Gospel,' and to 'the words of Christ,' in order that by diligently marking these, the King might know who were 'the true followers of Christ and teachers of His Gospel, and who were not.' Christ was poor; how then could those be followers of His, who, while 'they professed wilful poverty, yet had lords' lands and kings' riches?' Yea, rather than lose one jot of that which they have, they will set debate between king and king, realm and realm, yea, between the king and his subjects, and cause rebellion against the temporal power, to the which our Saviour Christ Himself obeyed and paid tribute; yea, they will curse and ban, as much as in them lieth, even into the deep pit of hell, all that gainsay their appetite, whereby they think their goods, promotions, or dignities, should decay.

"Your Grace may see what means and craft the spiritualty (as they will be called) imagine, to break and withstand the Acts which were made in your Grace's last Parliament, against their superfluities. Wherefore they that thus do, your Grace may know them not to be true followers of Christ. And though I named the spiritualty to be corrupt with this unchristian ambition, yet I mean not all to be faulty therein, for there be some good of them; neither would I that your Grace should take away the goods due to the Church, but take away all evil persons from the goods, and set better in their stead.

"Another most evident token that our Saviour Jesus Christ would that His Gospel and the preachers of it should be known by, is, that it should be despised among worldly-wise men, and that they should repute it but foolishness and deceivable doctrine; and the true preachers should be persecuted and hated, and driven from town to town, yea, and at the last, lose both goods and life. . . Therefore, wherever you see persecution, there is the Gospel, and there is the truth; and they that do persecute, be void and without all truth, not caring for the clear light which 'is come into the world, and which shall utter and show forth every man's works.' And they whose works be naught, dare not come to this light, but go about to stop it and hinder it, letting as much as they may, that the Holy Scriptures should not be read in our mother tongue, saying, that it would cause heresy and insurrection; and so they persuade, at the least way they would fain persuade, your Grace to keep it back. . . But as concerning this matter, other men" [especially Tyndale] "have showed your Grace their minds, how necessary it is to have the Scripture in English. *The which thing also your Grace hath promised by your last proclamation:* the which promise I pray God that your gracious Highness may shortly perform, even to-day, before to-morrow. Nor let the wickedness of these worldly men detain you from your godly purpose and promise.

"Therefore, good King, seeing that our Saviour Christ hath sent His servants—that is to say, His true preachers—and His own word also, to comfort our weak and sick souls, let not these worldly men make your Grace believe that they will cause insurrections and heresies, and such mischiefs as they imagine of their own mad brains, lest that He be avenged upon you and your realm, as He hath ever been avenged upon them which have obstinately withstood and gainsaid His word. Peradventure, they will lay this against me, and say that experience doth show, how that such men as call themselves followers of the Gospel, regard not your Grace's commandment, neither set by your proclamation; and so they will not regard or esteem other your Grace's laws. But this is but a crafty persuasion. For as concerning your last proclamation, prohibiting such books, the very true cause of it and chief counsellors, were they, whose evil living and cloaked hypocrisy these books uttered and disclosed. And, howbeit, that there were three or four that would have had the Scripture to go forth in English," [so that the assertion in the proclamation that all were opposed to this, is a manifest falsehood], "yet it happened there, as it is evermore seen,

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that the most part overcometh the better. And so it might be that these men" [the Reformers] "did not take this proclamation as *yours*, but as *theirs*," [*i.e.*, the majority's, More, and Gardiner, and Tunstale, and their friends], "set forth in your name, as they have done many times before, which hath put your realm in great hinderance and trouble, and brought it in great penury. For what marvel is it, that they, being so nigh of your counsel and so familiar with your lords, should provoke both your Grace and them to prohibit these books, which before by their own authority have forbidden the New Testament, under pain of everlasting damnation? For such is their manner, to send a thousand men to hell, ere they send one to God.

"And take heed whose counsels your Grace doth take in this matter, that you may do that God commandeth, and not that seemeth good in your own sight without the Word of God; that your Grace may be found acceptable in His sight, and one of the members of His Church; and, according to the office that He hath called your Grace unto, you may be found a faithful minister of His gifts, and not a defender of His faith: for He will not have it defended by man or man's power, but by His word only, by the which He hath evermore defended it, and that by a way far above man's power or reason, as all the stories of the Bible make mention.

"Wherefore, gracious King, remember yourself; have pity upon your soul; and think that the day is even at hand when you shall give account of your office, and of the blood that hath been shed with your sword. In the which day that your Grace may stand stedfastly, and not be ashamed, but be clear and ready in your reckoning, and to have (as they say) your *quietus est* sealed with the blood of our Saviour Christ, which only serveth at that day, is my daily prayer to Him that suffered death for our sins, which also prayeth to His Father for grace for us continually, to whom be all honour and praise for ever! Amen. The Spirit of God preserve your Grace! Anno Domini 1530, 1 die Decembris."[1]

No nobler letter exists in the whole wide compass of English literature; "it is," Froude truly says, "an address of almost unexampled grandeur;" and those who have allowed themselves to be deluded by the vague assertions of

[1] *Latimer's Remains*, pp. 297-309, from Foxe. There are many manuscript copies of the letter, a proof of its great popularity. In one volume of the State Papers (*Chapter House*, A. 1. 13), are two copies nearly complete.

ignorant writers, into the belief that Latimer was a mere scurrilous polemic who rose to dignity by pandering to the vices of the King, must here perceive how utterly they have been mistaken. The letter, indeed, is almost equally honourable to Henry and to Latimer: for if we admire the preacher who so faithfully discharged his duty, and so honestly spoke the truth, we cannot refuse to admire the sovereign also, who with all his imperious will, was yet courteous and magnanimous enough to listen to such admonitions as are too seldom whispered in Courts. The step which Latimer counselled, Henry was not yet prepared to take; a few years more were yet to elapse before the King should grant to all his subjects free liberty to read the Word of God in their native tongue; and then, (such was the wonderful "vengeance" of Providence), it was not any new translation prepared by the Churchmen of England, that received the royal sanction, but the very version of Tyndale which it had been so often declared penal to possess. Although, therefore, we cannot trace any immediate results of this eloquent letter, its pleading was not lost; and it deserves to be mentioned to Henry's honour, that so far from taking offence at Latimer's honest warnings, he soon after made him one of the royal chaplains. This was a noble compliment to the preacher's faithful zeal; and is a better panegyric on the character of the monarch than the most laboured defence of his admirers.

Though thus assured of the favour and esteem of his sovereign, Latimer was tired of Court life. Of weakly constitution and simple tastes, he longed for repose, and wished for some respite from Court intrigues and endless University squabbles. He determined, therefore, to retire to some quiet country living. Through the influence of Cromwell and Butts, a benefice was speedily procured for

him; and in spite of their remonstrances and urgent entreaties, he left London to reside in his parish. On January 14, 1531, he was, in the customary manner, instituted into the rectory of West Kington, in the county of Wilts and diocese of Salisbury. The Bishop, who was no other than the Cardinal Campeggio, was non-resident—had, indeed, never been in his diocese, and had only visited England as one of the Legates to preside in the trial of Henry's divorce; and in his absence, the diocese was administered by the Vicar-General, Richard Hiley, who instituted Latimer, and whom we shall meet again in the course of this biography. The institution is duly entered in the Register of the diocese of Salisbury.[1]

[1] "Anno Domini, 1530 (*i.e.* 1531), quarto-decimo die mensis Januarii, Magister Ricardus Hiley, Vicarius Generalis, etc. etc.; ecclesiam parochialem de West Kington, in Archidiaconatu Wilts, Sarum dioc. per mortem Dom. Will. Dorodyng, ultimi Rectoris ejusdem vacantem, atque ad collationem Dom. Laurentii Sarum Episcopi, pleno jure spectantem, Magistro Hugoni Latymer, Presbytero, Sanctæ Theologiæ Baccalaureo, contulit, ac ipsum Rectorem dictæ ecclesiæ instituit, etc."—Campeggio Register, fol. 24.

CHAPTER IV.

Latimer at West Kington, 1531 to 1535.

West Kington, the new field of labour to which Latimer had removed, is a little village on the confines of Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, some fourteen miles from Bristol, then the great commercial metropolis of the West of England. After the excitement of Court life, after the fatigue of his labours in London and the bitter controversies of Cambridge, his "little cure," as he affectionately styles it, must have seemed to promise a happy retreat where he might devote himself calmly and peacefully to the simple duties of his sacred office. Even at present the population of the parish numbers only a very few hundreds; and in Latimer's time, it was probably less, rather than greater. Of course there was the ordinary work of a country parish to perform; his "little bishopric," had its sick folks to be visited, its ignorance to be instructed, its "matrimonies" and other duties to be transacted; and Latimer, when he found so much to be done in a small cure, often wondered, "how men could go quietly to bed, who had great cures and many, and yet, peradventure, were in none of them at all."[1] Still, these labours were but slight in comparison with the toils and vexations of the last seven years; and to Latimer's over-strained mind, and over-exerted bodily

[1] Letter to Baynton. *Remains*, p. 350.

frame, the retirement of West Kington must have brought refreshing and invigorating rest.

His new parish, in its quiet rural repose, must have reminded him of his native parish of Thurcastone; and, singularly enough, there were some connecting links between the two. Within half-a-mile of his rectory was the famous Roman Fossway, which led through Gloucester and Warwick, and past his father's farm at Thurcastone, to Lincoln; and as he walked along its narrow path, and watched its straight arrow-like course across the Downs, his thoughts would naturally be attracted towards his distant home, and his childhood, and the interesting and wonderful career through which God had led him to his present position. At the time of Latimer's incumbency, moreover, it happened that the manor of West Kington had descended in part to the same family of Grey, Marquis of Dorset, who were lords of the manor of Thurcastone, and to whom, in all probability old Hugh Latimer paid his rent "of three or four pound" for his farm. A family of Latimers also had been established in Wiltshire, whose arms, the same as those of the Leicestershire Latimers, from whom they were an offshoot, are still conspicuous in some of the village churches; and it was a Latimer, parson of the neighbouring parish of Leigh Delamere, that gave the first rudiments of instruction to the renowned philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, of Malmesbury. The memory of Latimer is still fresh in his country charge, and the parishioners are not a little proud of the illustrious rector who once presided over them. "In the walk at the Parsonage-house, is a little scrubbed hollow oak called Latimer's oak, where he used to sit."[1] The Church, a Greek cross in form, dedicated to the Virgin

[1] See, for all particulars, Aubrey's *Collections*, enlarged and revised by Jackson.

Mary, and substantially the same in which Latimer used to officiate, has been reverently and carefully restored; his pulpit is still preserved in it, and a stained glass-window, erected some twelve years ago, testifies to the veneration still entertained for the Reformer's memory.

The arrival of a preacher such as Latimer, whose reputation had already travelled over England, would excite no small ferment in a quiet neighbourhood like West Kington. The orthodox priests around would, of course, feel alarmed lest this great teacher of heresy should corrupt the minds of their flocks; and the few, chiefly citizens of Bristol, who had embraced the doctrines of the Reformers, would be elated with the prospect of hearing that voice, whose boldness and eloquence had delighted the learned and the great. That the local excitement should find vent in discussions and disturbances was only what might have been anticipated. It was scarcely possible for Latimer to preach the truth without, either directly or by implication, condemning much of what was taught and practised around him; and however much he might long for quiet and rest, he was sure to find antagonists, and to be involved as before in debate and controversy. But, before entering upon the details of his life in West Kington, it will be necessary to revert to the general history of the progress of the Reformation in England.

The long futile negotiations for a divorce had roused the spirit of Henry; he had been bearded in his own kingdom by the emissaries of a foreign ecclesiastic, and he was determined to be supreme in England. Wolsey felt the first burst of his indignation, but the King was not satisfied with the Cardinal's fall. Nothing, indeed, was further from his intention than to take any steps that might seem to favour the Reformed opinions, but he was, at the same

time, resolved that the controversy between the Church and the Throne, which had been so often raised, should be settled for ever; the clergy must be taught that *he* and not the Pope was their master. Cromwell is said to have suggested to him the ingenious policy by which this resolution might be accomplished. One step had already been taken in the Parliament of 1529, and Henry had ascertained the irresolution and weakness of the clergy: by a bold resistance at that time the clergy might, perhaps, have averted the humiliation that was in store for them; but they had been unable to withstand the demands of the Commons, and Cromwell judged the time favourable for the next great step in his policy. In January, 1531, therefore, when Convocation reassembled, Cromwell, armed with the King's signet, boldly entered the assembly, and, seating himself among the Bishops, proceeded to unfold to the alarmed clergy the unpleasant predicament in which they had placed themselves. They, above all men in the kingdom he reminded them, were bound to obey the laws and to reverence the authority of the King. Instead of this, however, they had not only, contrary to their fealty to their sovereign, taken an oath of allegiance to the Pope, which was inconsistent with the duty of loyal subjects,[1] but they had, in open violation of the laws, recognised the late Cardinal as Papal Legate. The penalty was plain, he added; they had fallen under the law of *præmunire;* all their goods and chattels were forfeited to the King, and they were liable to imprisonment at discretion![2] Unquestionably, Henry's proceeding was "extremely harsh and unfair";[3] the law was practically obsolete; and he had himself fully recognised Wolsey's legatine authority. But

[1] See the Oath in *Foxe*, v. 61. [2] *Foxe*, v. 367.
[3] Hallam's *History of England*, i. 65.

this prosecution was the most effectual weapon for promoting his purpose; and it was a righteous retribution, which turned the most arrogant exhibition of ecclesiastical authority into the most formidable instrument for humbling the clergy. Convocation felt its helplessness. Resistance was hopeless. The precedent of Wolsey, who had at once acknowledged his guilt and surrendered his goods to the King, was fatally ominous. There were even signs of insubordination among the lower orders of the clerical body: the working clergy refused to assist the dignitaries, who alone had reaped the advantage in the day of the Church's glory. They had no alternative but submission. They implored the King's forgiveness, and purchased their pardon by promising to pay into the royal coffers a subsidy of £144,000—an enormous fine, equal to more than two millions of our money. But they had not even yet drained the bitter cup, which Cromwell had prepared for them. In the formal instrument, which assured them of the royal pardon, Henry was styled the "protector and supreme head of the Church and clergy of England" (*ecclesiæ et cleri Anglicani protector et supremum caput rex solus est*). The clergy were staggered by an acknowledgment which virtually annulled their oath to the Pope, and abolished the supremacy of the Holy See. Session after session, therefore, the subject was earnestly debated, and various proposals were made, by the insertion of limiting and modifying clauses, so to qualify the phraseology, as to preserve the dignity and authority of the Church unimpaired. But Henry refused to entertain their proposals; he "would have no *tantums*," he said. At length, on February 11, amidst the gloomy silence of the prelates, Warham, the Archbishop, declared that all consented to recognise Henry as "sole protector, only sovereign Lord,

and also, *as far as by the law of Christ is lawful,* supreme head of the English Church."[1] Bishop Fisher is said to have devised the one qualifying clause in this declaration, which, however, as he afterwards found to his cost, in no way limited Henry's supreme authority over the English Church. The clergy were right in standing to the last against the declaration which Henry wished to exact from them, for it was the citadel of the whole ecclesiastical system. From the moment it was declared to be the law of England, that the voice of the people speaking through parliament or through the sovereign was to be supreme, the authority of Rome was gone. Every subsequent step in the English Reformation was simply a corollary from this great fundamental position.

This humiliating business over, Convocation turned to the more congenial occupation of prosecuting those heretics who had been most conspicuous in opposing the doctrinal teaching of the Church. A Gloucestershire squire, William Tracy, had recently died, and when his will was proved in the Archbishop's Court it was found redolent with what was deemed the most dangerous heresy. The testator rested his whole hope of salvation on the mediation of Christ, repudiating entirely the intercession of any other mediators; and he had expressly forbidden the giving of any of his property to say masses for the benefit of his departed soul. Tracy himself had fortunately passed beyond the jurisdiction of Convocation, but, lest others should follow such an "impious and heretical" example, it was ordered, after many debates, that his dead body should be exhumed, and ignominiously thrown out of con-

[1] The words are worth recording: "Ecclesiæ et cleri Anglicani singularem protectorem, unicum et supremum dominum, et quantum per Christi legem licet, etiam supremum caput ipsius agnoscimus."

secrated ground. This foolish sentence, a mere impotent ebullition of spite, was duly executed by Dr. Parker, the Chancellor of the diocese of Worcester, who caused the dead body to be dug out of the grave and publicly burned, for which a few years later, when the tables were turned, he was deprived of his Chancellorship and heavily fined.[1]

Latimer's preaching was also brought under the notice of Convocation. Stokesley, the new Bishop of London, had now returned from the Continent, and assumed the administration of his diocese; and was determined to signalise his episcopate by unsparing zeal in extirpating heresy. On March 3, 1531, as soon as the question of the Royal Supremacy had been settled, he proposed to the Convocation articles of accusation against Latimer, Crome, and Bilney, for heretical preaching within the diocese of London.[2] The subject was resumed on March 18, but some difficulty apparently prevented its being further prosecuted at the time, and the matter was deferred to a future opportunity. Latimer and Bilney were, indeed, beyond Stokesley's reach, but the vindictive prelate, though disappointed for the time, resolved to watch for a favourable occasion of proceeding against them. Crome, however, as a London incumbent, was at hand, and was at once placed on his trial; and, with the same unhappy weakness which we have so often had to condemn in the leaders of the Reformation, he retracted his opinions, signed a series of propositions, affirming the common teaching of the Church; and publicly preached in favour

[1] His offence was that he had gone beyond his orders, which were merely to exhume the body. He was fined £40, or £600 of our money. —Stokesley's *Register*, fol. 72.

[2] Wilkin's *Concilia*, iii. 725.

of the doctrines which he had controverted.[1] It was a lamentable exhibition of vacillation, almost of apostacy; and Crome attempted to salve his conscience, and maintain his integrity, by the help of some ingenious and almost equivocal explanations; but the pious laity, though shocked, were not deceived. "I heard Master Crome preach," said Bainham, one of Stokesley's subsequent victims, "and say that he thought there was a purgatory after this life, and I thought in my mind that the said Master Crome *lied and spake against his conscience*, and there were a hundred more who thought as I did. I have also seen the confession of Master Crome in print, God wot, a very foolish thing, as I judge."[2] The preachers had failed in the hour of trial and danger; the laity were about to give them an example of constancy and fortitude.

Latimer meanwhile had, as might have been anticipated, been drawn into a hot controversy with some of the neighbouring clergy. He had been preaching in Marshfield, a village some four miles from West Kington, and, exasperated possibly by Stokesley's violence, he had condemned the conduct of the rulers of the Church in the strongest terms. His audience was no doubt numerous, and the most exaggerated versions of his sermons were soon spread through the country, to the alarm and horror of the easy-going parish priests of the neighbourhood. He had selected as his text a favourite verse from the Gospel of St. John: "All that ever came before me were thieves and robbers;" and, according to the popular report of his words, he had roundly asserted that all bishops, all popes, all rectors, all vicars, were thieves and robbers, and

[1] See the articles in Townsend's *Foxe*, vol. v., App. xvi., where, however, the trial is assigned to March, 1530, erroneously, because Stokesley was not in England in March, 1530.

[2] *Foxe*, iv. 697.

that all the hemp in England would not suffice to hang these clerical delinquents; he had declared that Peter had no supremacy over the other apostles, but that all Christians were priests; and had maintained that baptism was of no avail unless men lived in accordance with their Christian profession. As usual, the people had considerably misinterpreted the preacher's meaning. Latimer, it must be confessed, had not yet imbibed the spirit of the Protestant theology sufficiently to make such assertions as were ascribed to him; still the sermon was a bold one, and the neighbouring priests looked upon it as a sort of challenge to them. It formed the theme of their conversation when they met, and many a hard saying and bitter joke were vented against the great heretical preacher at the tables of the clergy. One of them, William Sherwood, in the parish of Derham, adjoining West Kington, bolder than the rest, and unable to restrain his indignation, wrote to Latimer a long letter of expostulation, on what he is pleased to style his "insane satire," at Marshfield. He had already, "over his wine,"[1] refuted and exposed the Reformer to his own satisfaction, and he now felt emboldened to come forward as the champion of the Church against heretics. His letter is a mixture of assumed courtesy and offensive rudeness, which could not fail to rouse Latimer's indignation.

"I know you will not be offended at me," thus he began, "if I venture to give you a little Christian admonition about that unchristian sermon, or rather mad satire, of yours, lately preached at Marshfield. Christ said, 'He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber,' whereas you, who cannot search hearts, declared that all bishops, popes, rectors (all except yourself, and some more of your class, I suppose), were thieves and robbers, for hanging whom,

[1] "*Inter pocula*," says Latimer in his reply.

as you said in an audacious and impious hyperbole, the whole hemp of England would not suffice. Ah! my brother, we should not judge rashly before the time. St. Paul, nay, Christ himself, warns us not to judge others. Alas! alas! Latimer, what madness transported you to declare falsely that there were more thieves than shepherds in Christ's Church? Far different was the opinion of the famous St. Cyprian, etc. You said also that every one who with Peter confesses Christ to be the Son of the living God, was a Peter, as if the passage belonged no more to Peter, the supreme Vicar of Christ on earth, than to any Christian whatever; the very error of the Lutherans, who maintain that all Christians are priests; a heresy long ago condemned by the Church. And even more than this, you said that a baptized man who followed the lusts of the flesh was no more a Christian than a Jew or a Turk, a horrible doctrine worthy only of such heretics as Zwingle and Ecolampadius."[1]

The rest of the letter is in the same vein, and need not be quoted at length. Latimer answered in a somewhat rough and indignant mood; for Sherwood, while assuming an air of courtesy and politeness, had written with great bitterness, and was endeavouring to excite odium against the Reformer by classing him with the great Continental heresiarchs, whose opinions Latimer as yet by no means shared. After reproving Sherwood for his insulting and calumnious insinuations, he proceeded to refute his opponent's arguments:—

"Granted that I said all popes, bishops, and rectors, who enter not by the door but climb up some other way, are thieves and robbers, in so saying I was not judging the persons, but their manner of entrance, as Christ Himself was. And from this assertion you, in your wisdom, infer that all popes, bishops, and rectors are thieves, at least that I said so. Is that a fair inference? Might I not retort upon you the warning of St. Paul and of Christ, not to judge? How is it, pray, that when I say all who enter not by the door are thieves, I seem to you to say absolutely that all are

[1] The original, in Latin, is in *Foxe*, vii., 480.

thieves, unless perhaps almost all seem to you to climb up some other way, and not to enter in by the door? If this be your opinion, at least forbear to say what you think, if you are wise (and you are quite wise enough), for you must see what danger you would bring upon yourself by such an assertion. Neither did I say anything derogatory of the primacy of Peter, for that subject was not mentioned by me; on the contrary, I simply reminded my hearers that the Church of Christ was founded on a rock, not on the sand; and warned them that they should not trust too much in a dead faith, in which case they would perish and would be shamefully overcome by the gates of hell; but should show forth their faith by their works, and thus at length obtain everlasting life. You are manifestly one of those who are more ready to defend the primacy of Peter, even when there is no occasion, than to renew the blessed confession of Peter in suitable works of holiness. Finally, I affirm that a Christian, that is, a person received by baptism into the number of Christians, if he live not according to his profession, but yield himself up to the lusts of the flesh, is no more a Christian as touching the inheriting of eternal life which is promised to Christ's people, than a Jew or a Turk; yea, rather his condition at the last day will be worse than the others. We shall not be placed amongst Christ's sheep at the right hand if, while professing Christ, we have not lived a life worthy of Christ, but have disgraced our profession by wicked living. It is the duty of a preacher to exhort his hearers to be Christians after such a manner, that suffering here with Christ they may reign with him in heaven; and to teach them that to be a Christian after any other fashion is not to be a Christian at all. So speak the Scriptures, and the interpreters of the Scriptures, though you may call it heretical. The coveteous man, the fornicator, the murderer, you say, is a Catholic and a servant of Christ. For the humour of the thing I will carry on the jest with you. A fornicator, you say, is a servant of Christ; but he is also a servant of sin and of the devil; therefore the same man *can* serve two masters; which Christ was not aware of. And if dead faith makes a Catholic, the very devils belong to the Catholic Church; since, according to James, 'they believe and tremble.' If your conversation is not milder than your writings, I hope to come in contact with neither; but may all bitterness and pride and anger and clamour and evil speaking be taken from you, with all malice! Yet neither by words nor by writing will you annoy me. I fancy

you would not wish for such hearers as you have shown yourself to be. May God make you more charitable, or keep you as far as possible from my preaching!"

Sherwood, who had probably been the great oracle of the neighbourhood previous to Latimer's arrival, was determined to have the last word in the controversy, and he ventured on a rejoinder in the somewhat more cautious vein of a man who was anxious to quit the field without dishonour. He had received Latimer's letter, he said, and read it, though it deserved only to be burned. He denied that he had said anything bitter against Latimer, or had reviled him over his cups; all that he had done was, when some of Latimer's hearers told him that the preacher had spoken disrespectfully of the Ave Mary, to warn them against the doctrines of such heretical teachers. Was this abusing Latimer? Was it not rather taking pious precautions for the benefit of his people? Far be it from him to exhibit any anger; he had learned from Christ to love even his enemies, much more, then, must he love a brother and fellow-servant of the same God. As to Latimer's defence and explanations of his doctrines, he accepted them gladly; they had, indeed, been very differently reported to him by those who were present, but as they were now explained, they were sound and Catholic, and he had nothing to say against them.

In fact, it is apparent from his second letter, that Sherwood had discovered that he had overrated his strength when he thus ventured into the arena to measure himself with the accomplished disputant against whom the wits of Cambridge had contended in vain; and he was only too glad to be able to retire with any appearance of honour from the unequal contest.

About midsummer of this year (1531) Latimer again visited London, solicited probably by his friends Cromwell and Butts, who had strongly opposed his resolution to reside on his living. Of course he could not escape being importuned to preach, for the recollection of his eloquence was still fresh, and there were many who longed to hear again from his lips words of comfort and life. He did preach, accordingly, in Kent,[1] at the instant request of the parish priest; but knowing Stokesley's furious zeal against all reformed doctrines, he for some time resolutely declined to officiate in London. At last he was prevailed upon by the entreaties of some merchants, who showed him that there were many very desirous to hear him, "who had great hunger and thirst of the Word of God, and of ghostly doctrine;" and he preached in St. Mary Abchurch. He had no intention of defying Stokesley's authority, but neither had he any wish to escape notice and evade responsibility. He declined twice or thrice to comply with the request of the merchants; he showed them that he had no licence from the Bishop of the Diocese, but only from the University of Cambridge; and insisted that his name should be plainly made known to the incumbent[2] of the church in which he was to preach. Being satisfied that all proper precautions were taken not to practise any deception, he at last consented to preach, and was received with great courtesy by the parson and curate, who gave him the common benediction as he entered the pulpit. Notwithstanding all this urgency on the part of the merchants, however, and the civility on the part of the clergy of the church, Latimer

[1] Perhaps at Ickham, where his friend Edward Isaac, of Well Court, resided. See *Remains*, p. 324.

[2] Thomas Clark was then incumbent. Newcourt's *Repertorium*.

was not without the suspicion that "it was a train and trap laid before him, to the intent that Stokesley, or some other pertaining to him, should have been there to take him in his sermon;"[1] and this suspicion incited him to express himself with more boldness. The Epistle, from which he preached, supplied a theme admirably suited for the circumstances of the time. "Ye are not under the law," such was the text; and thus the preacher began to expound it: "Christians not under the law! not subject to the law! Surely this is a dangerous saying, if it be not rightly understood, sounding as if Christians were at liberty to break the laws. What if the adversaries of St. Paul had so understood them, and had accused St. Paul before the Bishop of London for preaching them? If my lord of London would have listened to St. Paul declaring his own opinion of his own words, then he should have escaped, and his opponents should have been rebuked; but if he had given sentence according to the representations of the accusers, then good St. Paul must have borne a fagot on his back, even at Paul's cross, my lord of London, bishop of the same, sitting under the cross. Oh, it had been a goodly sight to have seen St. Paul thus!" Judges, therefore, the preacher went on to argue, ought to be careful in proceeding against teachers of religion, and should place no reliance on the reports of ignorant or dishonest hearers, who either misunderstood or misrepresented what had been addressed to them. In the rest of his sermon he diverged to the topics which he was accustomed on all occasions to introduce as of great moment. He warned his hearers against the common abuses and superstitions of the day, and especially against that fertile source of corruption

[1] Letter to Baynton, *Remains*, p. 327.

and immorality, the going on pilgrimages. "If you will go pilgrimages," said he, "make your pilgrimages to your poor neighbours around you." He is even said to have spoken with disrespect of the "Sacrament of the Altar," but this is probably only an inference on the part of some hearer more advanced in Protestant theology than the preacher;[1] for Latimer did not till many years later abandon the Romish views of the nature of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Such a sermon could not but excite Stokesley's indignation. He viewed it as personally directed against himself, and not without good reason; for in conjunction with Sir Thomas More, he had just entered upon that career of violent and even illegal persecution for which his episcopate is so infamously notorious. He endeavoured to excite Henry's indignation against Latimer, by representing his sermon as a defence of the heretics who were under trial, and chiefly of Bilney; but, apparently, Henry refused to listen to Stokesley's entreaties, for Latimer was allowed to return unmolested to his country charge.

It is just possible, though there is no direct evidence of the fact, that on this journey to London, Latimer may, for the last time, have conversed with his dear friend and spiritual father, Bilney. That gentle Reformer had at last come to the resolution that it was his duty, at any risk to himself, to preach openly the doctrines which he had twice in his weakness ignominiously denied. The resolution grew up in the secrecy of his own heart, without communication with any one; and in the spring of 1531, he summoned together the friends that still remained at Cambridge, and solemnly took leave of them with the affecting

[1] See articles against John Tyrrel, *Foxe*, v., p. 39.

words, "I must needs go up to Jerusalem." They saw that remonstrances would be idle, and with tears they commended him to the keeping and comfort of God. He set out accordingly on his last journey. He directed his steps first of all to his native county of Norfolk; where he visited the faithful, and preached in the fields; confessing and bewailing his former cowardice; assuring his hearers that what he taught was the very truth of God; and warning them to beware of following his evil example in denying their faith, by listening to the timid advice of earthly friends. From Norfolk, he proceeded southwards, and probably visited London, for, six weeks before his arrest, he was seen at Greenwich.[1] He carried about with him copies of Tyndale's New Testament, which he distributed wherever he went. At length the Bishop of Norwich discovered and seized him. He was a relapsed heretic, caught in the very act of disseminating heretical books; and his case was a very simple one. A writ for burning him was speedily procured from More, who is said to have jocularly remarked that in so flagrant an instance the proper course would have been "to burn him first and procure a writ afterwards." After a short and summary trial, he was condemned, degraded from the priesthood, and handed over to the sheriff to be burned. Still his courage did not forsake him; he remained cheerful and serene. On the evening before his martyrdom his friends came to visit him, and sought to console him with the common-places of comfort. "The fire might be hot to the body," they said, "but the Spirit of God would be able to cool it to his everlasting refreshing." "I know by experience," Bilney replied, putting his finger into the flame of the candle, and holding it there till it was burned to the

[1] Foxe V. 22. Laurence Staple saw him at Greenwich six weeks before his arrest; he was arrested early in August.

first joint, "I know by experience, that fire, by God's ordinance, is naturally hot; but yet I am persuaded by God's Holy Word, and by the experience of some spoken of in the same, that in the flame they felt no heat, and in the fire they felt no consumption. And I constantly believe that however the stubble of this my body shall be wasted by it, yet my soul and spirit shall be purged thereby: a pain for the time, whereon, notwithstanding, followeth joy unspeakable. For God himself has said, 'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, and called thee by thy name, thou art mine; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; *when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*'" The words had often been the stay of Bilney in his retirement; and his Bible, still preserved in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, has the passage marked with a pen in the margin, an interesting and affecting memorial of the gentle martyr.

Next morning, August 19th, he was led to the Lollards' Pit, a capacious hollow, near the gate of the city of Norwich, admirably adapted to afford to the assembled crowds a full view of the terrible spectacle. It was a boisterous day; and the wind blew the blaze away from Bilney, who was miserably scorched before the flames were strong enough to destroy him. Even in that dreadful hour, however, the martyr did not lose his constancy; in the agony of death, while he beat upon his breast in the paroxysms of pain, he was overheard by the bystanders commending his soul in faith to the keeping of the Divine Master, whom he thus glorified in the flames. Reports were, indeed, circulated after his death that he had again recanted and abjured his faith; but on examination, even before so prejudiced a

judge as Sir Thomas More, these proved to be unsubstantial and little worthy of credit. The priest with whom they originated,[1] was an authority by no means removed above suspicion; he was guilty of embezzling charitable funds, and was publicly denounced in the council-chamber of Norwich, as "a liar, not fit to come amongst honest men."[2] Foxe's account of the martyrdom, which has been followed in this biography, was derived from the information of Archbishop Parker, who had come from Cambridge to be present at the scene, and whose veracity few will call in question: and confirmed as it is by the depositions of the Mayor of Norwich in the State Paper Office, we are sufficiently warranted in dismissing the report of Bilney's abjuration as an unfounded calumny against his memory. History has hardly done justice to the character of Bilney and his important services in promoting the Reformation in England. Gentle, timid, and unassuming, only his intimate friends knew his great and real worth. Like Latimer, he was very slow in abandoning the doctrines to which he had been so long accustomed; but even Luther himself did not hold more firmly the great truth which had been to Bilney the source of all his spiritual life and comfort,—the free forgiveness of sins through the atonement of Christ. By way of epitaph upon this gentle leader of the Reformation, let us listen to Latimer's opinion of him:—

"I have known Bilney a great while, and have been his ghostly father many a time; and to say the truth, I have known hitherto few such, so prompt and ready to do every man good after his power, both friend and foe; noisome wittingly to no man; and towards his enemy so charitable, so seeking to reconcile them as he did, I have known yet not many; and to be short, a very simple good soul,

[1] Called "John, the Curate of Norwich," in the State Papers.

[2] These are the words of the Mayor of Norwich. The documents are in the State Paper Office, and have been printed by Townsend. *Foxe*, vol. iv. app.

nothing fit or meet for this wretched world, whose blind fashion and miserable state (yea, far from Christ's doctrine) he could as evil bear, and would sorrow, lament and bewail it as much as any man that ever I knew: as for his singular learning, as well in Holy Scripture as in all other good letters, I will not speak of it. And if a man living so mercifully, so charitably, so patiently, so continently, so studiously and virtuously, and killing his old Adam (that is to say, mortifying his evil affections and blind motions of his heart) so diligently, should die an evil death," (*i.e.*, died a wicked, sinful man, as the clergy in general said), "there is no more; but 'Let him that standeth, beware that he fall not;' for if such as he shall die evil, what shall become of me, such a wretch as I am?"[1]

Bilney was not the only martyr of that furious autumn of 1531. Just about the time of his death, Stokesley caused a priest, Richard Bayfield, to be seized, and confined in his notorious "coal-house," at Fulham. Bayfield had been exceedingly active in circulating prohibited books;[2] and great efforts were accordingly made to induce him to confess his accomplices. He was, it is said, fastened upright to the walls of his dungeon, chained round the feet, the neck and the waist, that the misery of this sleepless posture might wring the secret from him; but in vain, he was resolute, and named no one. All other means having failed to shake his constancy, he was, on November 20, handed over to the secular power, in the usual hypocritical form, "requiring in the bowels of Christ that the execution of this worthy punishment to be done upon thee, may be so moderated that there be neither over much cruelty, nor too much favourable gentleness; but that it may be to the health and salvation of thy soul, and to the extirpation, fear, terror, and conversion of all other heretics unto the unity of the Catholic faith."

[1] Letter to Sir Edward Baynton, *Remains*, p. 30.

[2] No fewer than *fifty-four* works had been distributed by him, including the works of Luther, Zwingle, and Melanchthon, besides Tyndale's New Testament: see *Foxe*.

Stokesley was present at the trial, and, according to Foxe, was so infuriated at his resolute refusal to incriminate any one, that he struck him a violent blow with his crozier on the breast, causing him to fall senseless on the pavement. As so often happened on such occasions, either from carelessness, or mistaken kindness on the part of the officials, the fire on the day of martyrdom was not made at first sufficiently strong to consume the unhappy victim. Bayfield stood for some time in miserable torture, and his left arm was burned and fell from his body, before the flames reached any vital part; but he continued unmoved in prayer till life was extinct.

A fresh victim speedily followed him to the stake. John Tewkesbury, a leather-merchant in the City, who had abjured under Tunstal, was again apprehended in the autumn of 1531. He was subjected to the most barbarous ill-usage at the hands of the philosophic Chancellor, who had forgotten all the theoretical toleration that he had advocated in his earlier days. Tewkesbury was taken to More's residence in Chelsea, and whipped at the famous "Jesus' tree," or "tree of troth," in that renowned garden where More had been seen walking, with the Sovereign's arm lovingly encircling his neck. Still refusing to recant, Tewkesbury was subjected to yet more cruel usage. Cords were tied round his head, and strained till the blood started from his eyes; and, in defiance of the law, he was racked in the Tower till he was almost lame.[1] Terrified by the severity which he had experienced, Tewkesbury at

[1] These accusations of cruelty against More and Stokesley rest, of course, mainly on the authority of Foxe; and it is just possible that the good martyrologist, writing when the fires of Smithfield were scarcely extinguished, may have drawn some of the pictures in too dark colours. The cruelty, however, is in keeping with More's ferocious and scurrilous language towards Tyndale; and it is certain that he permitted his rage against the Reformers to betray him into illegal violence.

last abjured, and was dismissed, after having entered into recognizances to appear again when called upon. Bayfield's constancy, however, filled him with remorse and shame at his own weakness and apostasy. He could not keep silence; conscience compelled him again to teach what he believed to be the truth of God; he was seized, brought once more before Stokesley and More at Chelsea, condemned, and burnt in Smithfield on December 20, the anniversary of Stokesley's consecration, which was thus appropriately commemorated; no royal writ having been obtained by either the Bishop or the Chancellor to warrant their persecuting the King's subjects to the death.

Stokesley, as we have seen, had already this year made one unsuccessful attempt to get Latimer into his power, and, though he had failed, he had not forgotten the provocation of the Reformer's sermon, and was secretly devising some means of accomplishing his purpose. Latimer's bishop, Cardinal Campeggio, was abroad, and no plans could be concerted with him; but Stokesley wrote to Hiley, the Chancellor of the Diocese, complaining of the contempt done to his authority by Latimer's preaching in St. Mary Abchurch, and requiring him to refer the case to London, where the offence had been committed, that the offender might be judged there. His request might have been resented by Hiley as an unwarrantable interference with the affairs of another diocese; but Stokesley was an active prelate, possessing great influence both with Sir Thomas More and with the aged primate Warham: and it was not prudent to deny him any favour on which he had set his heart. Happily ignorant of the snares that were being woven round him, Latimer was looking forward with pleasant anticipations of making merry among his parishioners at Christmas, when he was summoned to appear

before Hiley. He was informed of Stokesley's complaint against him, and was asked to go to London to be tried. He declined. Hiley, he said, was his ordinary, and might "reform him as far as he needed reformation, as well and as soon as the Bishop of London." Besides, it was a severe winter; he was weak and feeble, suffering from various painful diseases; and he would therefore be very loth to take so long a journey, especially as he was not bound to comply with Stokesley's request. He promised, however, that if Hiley commanded him to go to London, he would obey, whatever annoyance and pain it might occasion him. Hiley expressed himself satisfied with this answer, and promised to communicate it to Stokesley. In this interview Latimer was accompanied by his friend Sir Edward Baynton, lord of the neighbouring manor of Bromcham, and a courtier in high favour with Henry; and at his suggestion, probably, the Reformer explained his doctrines on the subject of purgatory and the worshipping of saints, in the hope that Hiley might transmit to Stokesley an account sufficiently favourable to pacify that vindictive prelate.

Latimer, however, had no such hope of escaping Stokesley's animosity so easily; and he returned to West Kington with a heavy heart, disconsolate, and almost despondent, tempted to abandon the struggle, and to seek rest and safety on the Continent. In his grief he wrote a long letter to Baynton, explaining his teaching, and narrating what had occurred on his last visit to London. He was particularly indignant at Stokesley's interference with him: "Meseems," says he, "it were more comely for my lord to be a preacher himself, having so great a cure as he hath, than to be a disquieter and troubler of preachers, and to preach nothing at all himself. If it

would please his lordship to take so great a labour and pain at any time, as to come to preach in my little bishopric at West Kington, whether I were present or absent myself, I would thank his lordship heartily, and think myself greatly bounden to him, that he of his charitable goodness would go so far to help to discharge me in my cure, or else I were more unnatural than a beast unreasonable; nor yet I would dispute, contend, or demand by what authority, or where he had authority so to do, as long as his predication were faithful and to the edification of my parishioners." As to the charge of preaching without sufficient authority, Latimer maintained that he had as good a licence to preach as any that Stokesley could give. The University of Cambridge had authority to admit twelve yearly, and Henry had decreed that all who were thus admitted should have full liberty to preach anywhere in England, so long as they preached well; Latimer had therefore royal authority to support him in preaching in London. As to the matter of his preaching, if it were taken as he spoke it, Latimer felt confident that Stokesley would find nothing to condemn in it. He had, no doubt, reproved the abuses and superstitions of voluntary things; he did not, however, condemn the things themselves, though those who found "less money in their boxes by condemnation of the abuses," falsely declared that he did. He admitted that if Stokesley were to inquire minutely into his opinions, he would find much to displease him, for in many things he had changed. Thus, he adds:—

"I have thought in times past, that the Pope, Christ's vicar, hath been lord of all the world as Christ is; so that if he should have deprived the King of his crown, or you of the lordship of Bromeham, it had been enough, for he could do no wrong. *Now*, I might be hired to think otherwise.

"I have thought in times past, that the Pope's dispensation of

pluralities of benefices, and absence from the same, had discharged consciences before God, forasmuch as I have heard certain Scriptures bended to corroborate the same. *Now*, I might be easily entreated to think otherwise.

"I have thought in times past, that the Pope could have spoiled purgatory at his pleasure with a word of his mouth. *Now*, learning might persuade me otherwise, or else I would marvel why he would suffer so much money to be bestowed that way, which is so needful to be bestowed otherwise, and to deprive us of so many patrons in heaven as he might deliver out of purgatory.

"I have thought in times past, that if I had been a friar, and in a cowl, I could not have been damned, nor afraid of death, and by occasion of the same I have been minded many times to have been a friar, namely, when I was sore sick and diseased. *Now*, I abhor my superstitious foolishness.

"I have thought in times past, that divers images of saints could have holpen me, and done me much good, and delivered me of my diseases. *Now*, I know that one can help as much as another, and it pitieth my heart that my lord, and such as my lord is, can suffer the people to be so craftily deceived. It were too long to tell you what blindness I have been in, and how long it were ere I could forsake such folly, it was so corporate in me; but by continual prayer, continual study of Scripture, and oft communing with men of more right judgment, God hath delivered me.

"Yea, men think that my lord himself hath thought in times past, that by God's law a man might marry his brother's wife, which now both dare think and say contrary" [Stokesley was one of the most active agents in promoting Henry's divorce], "and yet this his boldness might have chanced, in Pope Julius's days, to stand him either in a fire or else in a fagot."

Latimer was well aware of the gravity of the occasion; Stokesley was a determined enemy, and if he once got him into his power, would not readily let him free again.

"I know," he concludes, "that the matter is as weighty as my life is worth; but how to look substantially upon it, otherwise know not I, than to pray my Lord God day and night, that as He has emboldened me to preach His truth, so He will strengthen me to suffer for it, to the edification of them which have taken" [received] "by the working of Him, fruit thereby. And even so I desire you

and all other that favour me for His sake, likewise to pray; for it is not I, without His mighty helping hand, that can abide that brunt; but I have trust that God will help me in time of need, which if I had not, the ocean-sea, I think, should have divided my Lord of London and me by this day. For it is a rare thing for a preacher to have favour at his hands, which is no preacher himself and yet ought to be. If I be not prevented shortly, I intend to make merry with my parishioners this Christmas, for" [in spite of] "all the sorrow, lest perchance I never return to them again; and I have heard say, that a doe is as good in winter as a buck in summer."[1]

Baynton communicated this letter to some of his friends, who censured it severely, condemning it especially for its arrogance. "God only knew the truth for certain," so Baynton's friends urged, with the time-honoured commonplaces which have been in all ages the creed of the indolent; "and if any man's preaching excited contention rather than charity, whatever he might allege in defence of his opinions, yet the teaching was not to be taken as of God, because it broke the chain of Christian charity, and made division in the people." Baynton himself, with the true instincts of a courtier, recommended caution and submission; it was not for an unlearned man like him, he said, to give sentence in such high matters, but as a prudent man he was of course bound to adhere to the opinions of the majority, unless it should please God to add to Latimer's opinions converts "in such honest number," as ought to induce him to change his belief.[2] It is this indolent ignorance, assuming the garb of modesty and prudence, which has always been the grand obstacle to every reformation; and Latimer, though unusually busy with the cares of his parish, and at a distance from books

[1] Latimer's *Remains*, pp. 322–334.
[2] See Baynton's Letter, in Foxe, vol. vii. p. 490.

and from learned friends, lost no time in defending himself against the charges of his cautious critics.

"Ye mislike that I say *I am sure* that I preach the truth; saying in reproof of the same, that God alone knoweth certain truth. Indeed God alone knoweth all certain truth. But as to my presumption and arrogancy, either I am certain or uncertain that it is truth that I preach. If it be truth, why may not I say so, to courage my hearers to receive the same more ardently and ensue it more studiously? If I be uncertain, why dare I be so bold to preach it? And if your friends, in whom ye trust so greatly, be preachers themselves, after their sermons, I pray you, ask them whether they be certain and sure that they taught you the truth or no; and send me word what they say, that I may learn to speak after them" [to answer as they did]. "If they say that they be sure, ye know what followeth" [they were arrogant], "if they say they be unsure, when shall *you* be sure, that have so doubtful teachers and unsure? And you yourselves whether are you certain or uncertain that Christ is your Saviour?"[1]

Latimer utterly denied that there was any foundation for the charge of pride brought against him; he had not taught great subtleties and high matters to the people, but had confined himself to the simple utterance of "true faith and fruits of the same." If this preaching was followed by dissension and division, he was very sorry; such was not his intention; still it would not be safe to conclude, as Baynton's friends had done, that such preaching must necessarily be of the devil. St. Paul's preaching to the Galatians had occasioned much dissension in that Church, but it did not follow that St. Paul was not a true apostle. St. Jerome's writings had stirred up bitter dissension, were they therefore not of God? The doctrine that marriage with a deceased brother's wife was illegal had occasioned much dissension in a Christian congregation, were those who maintained this doctrine (that is, Henry,

[1] Second letter to Baynton: Latimer's *Remains*, pp. 334, etc.

Stokesley, and others), to be forthwith condemned as of the devil? And recurring again to a position that had already excited much odium against him, he asked:—

"What mean your friends by a *Christian* congregation? All those, trow ye, that have been Christianed? But many of those be in worse condition, and shall have greater damnation, than many unchristianed. For it is not enough to a Christian congregation that is of God, to have been christened; but it is to be considered what we promise when we be christened, to renounce Satan, his works, his pomps; which thing if we busy not ourselves to do, let us not crack" [*i. e.* boast], "that we profess Christ's name in a Christian congregation. The devils believe in God to their little comfort. I pray God to save you and your friends from *that* believing congregation, and from that faithful company.

"Ye pray for agreement both in the truth and in uttering of the truth, when shall that be, as long as we will not hear the truth, but disquiet the preachers of the truth, because they reprove our evilness? And, to say the truth, better it were to have a deformity in preaching, so that some would preach the truth of God, than to have such a uniformity, that the silly people should be thereby occasioned to continue still in their lamentable ignorance, corrupt judgment, superstition, and idolatry, and esteem things, as they do all, preposterously; doing that that they need not for to do, leaving undone that they ought for to do, for want of knowing what is to be done."[1]

Latimer had still much to learn; he was slow in pushing the doctrines he had adopted to their logical conclusions, and was anxious to retain all the ceremonies of the Church, only purified from what he deemed incidental abuses; but the gulf between him and the defenders of the Church was daily widening, and the necessity of supporting his own teaching, was gradually compelling him to advance farther and farther in the direction of a thorough reform, both in doctrine and in ritual. He was still engaged in

[1] Second letter to Baynton. *Remains*, pp. 234-351.

his animated reply when a messenger arrived from Sir Walter Hungerford, of Farley, with the dreaded citation to appear before Stokesley to answer for the "crimes and grave excesses committed by him within the diocese of London" (*certis articulis sive interrogatoriis, crimina seu excessus graves infra jurisdictionem London per ipsum commissos concernentibus, personaliter responsurus*). Hiley had yielded to Stokesley's importunity, and had issued the citation on January 10, 1532, requiring Latimer to proceed to London immediately, and appear before the Bishop in the Consistory Court in St. Paul's Church, on Monday, Jan. 29, between the hours of nine and eleven in the forenoon.[1] Latimer could not refuse to obey the citation of his lawful ordinary, and with a heavy heart he prepared for the unpleasant journey, which might involve so many important consequences. "What a world is this," he remarked, "that I shall be put to so great labour and pains, besides great costs above my power, for preaching of a poor simple sermon! But, I trow, our Saviour Christ said true, 'I must needs suffer and so enter;' so perilous a thing it is to live virtuously with Christ."

With melancholy forebodings of what might befall him, Latimer set off for London. It was almost exactly a year since he had come to reside in his country rectory, hoping for rest and peace after the turmoil of the Court and the bitter controversies of Cambridge; but his wishes had been disappointed; debate and strife had followed him and invaded his retirement; and he was now about to appear before a determined and implacable judge who prided himself on showing no mercy to any teacher of heresy. On arriving in London, he was immediately placed on his trial

[1] Foxe, vii. 455.

before Stokesley and a secret conclave of episcopal assessors. He was repeatedly examined; but nothing was elicited on which any definite charge of heresy could be founded. For Latimer, it will be remembered, had not yet diverged far from the customary orthodoxy of the Church: he had inveighed against the abuses and superstitions which so widely prevailed, and had condemned the carelessness and ignorance of the clergy; but this had been done even by Convocation itself, and could not be construed to be a doctrinal heresy. Still the Bishops knew that in Latimer they had one of the chief leaders of those clergy who were in favour of the Reformed doctrines; and they were resolved to find some ground for proceeding against him, and for involving him in liability to punishment. Latimer himself has left us a graphic account of the expedients devised to entrap him.[1]

"Once I was in examination before five or six bishops, where I had much turmoiling. Every week twice I came to examination, and many snares and traps were laid to get something. At the last I was brought forth to be examined into a chamber hanged with arras, where I was before wont to be examined; but now at this time the chamber was somewhat altered; for, whereas before there was wont ever to be a fire in the chimney, now the fire was taken away, and an arras-hanging hanged over the chimney, and the table stood near the chimney's end; so that I stood between the table and the chimney's end. There was among these bishops that examined me one with whom I have been very familiar, and took him for my great friend, an aged man, and he sat next the table end. Then among all other questions, he put forth one, a very subtle and crafty one; and such one indeed as I could not think so great danger in. And when I should make answer, 'I pray you, Master Latimer,' said he, 'speak out, I am very thick of hearing, and here be many that sit far off.' I marvelled at this, that I was bidden speak out, and began to misdeem, and gave an ear to the chimney. And

[1] In his sermon preached at Stamford. *Sermons*, p. 294.

there I heard a pen walking in the chimney behind the cloth. They had appointed one there to write all my answers; for they made sure work that I should not start from them. The question was this:— 'Master Latimer, do you not think on your conscience, that you have been suspected of heresy?' A subtle question, a very subtle question. There was no holding of peace would serve. To hold my peace had been to grant myself faulty. To answer it was every way full of danger. But God, which alway hath given me answer, helped me, or else I could never have escaped it; and delivered me from their hands."

Latimer has not recorded the answer by which he escaped this question so ingeniously contrived to ensnare him; but he never was in a position where his ready wit and skill in logical fence were so urgently required to secure his safety. If the charge of heretical teaching could be clearly substantiated against him, he knew well that he could expect no favour; Henry still prided himself on his unimpeachable orthodoxy; and neither Cromwell nor Anne Boleyn could have ventured to intercede for a convicted heretic.

Fortunately for Latimer, the circumstances of the times were such as to inspire Stokesley with caution. Parliament had assembled, and the Commons were with one voice complaining of the tyrannical proceedings of the clergy in the Ecclesiastical Courts. The divorce, too, still dragging its slow length along, was embittering the relations of the Pope and the King; and loud murmurs against Papal insolence were beginning to be uttered all over England. At the very time when Latimer was on his way to London, Francis I. had written to the Pope urging him to consent to Henry's proposals,[1] assuring him that there was no longer the customary ready obedience to the Papal See in England, and warning him that if he

[1] See the letter in Froude's *Pilgrim*, p. 86.

persisted in denying the King's request, the Papal authority would run the risk of serious diminution. So threatening, indeed, was the aspect of affairs at the time, that Warham apprehended the most serious disasters to the Church; and, unable in his old age to make any more active resistance, he attempted to save his dignity by solemnly protesting, at Lambeth, in the presence of a few notaries, against any statutes that might be passed in Parliament in contravention of the authority of the Pope and the privileges of the See of Canterbury.[1] It is not easy to conjecture any purpose that could have been promoted by such a protest, which was of course studiously kept secret; it is easy enough, however, to understand, that under a leader who thus retired from the open contest to protest in private, the cause of the clergy was hopeless: they were already "demoralized," and defeat was inevitable. The bishops were thus thoroughly alive to the necessity of caution in proceeding against Latimer, so as not to provoke public indignation by any summary or unjust measure; and Latimer, for his part, was equally cautious not to commit himself, for he believed that a man ought not to sacrifice his life except for a very worthy reason. For six weeks, therefore, the examination continued without any result; and, at the end of that time, Stokesley, having failed to implicate him in any charge of heresy, referred the case to Convocation.

On March 11, 1532, therefore, Latimer was summoned before Convocation,[2] and was then required to subscribe

[1] His protest is dated Feb. 24, 1532, and is printed in Wilkins, iii. 746, and Burnet v. p. 32:—"Nolumus alicui statuto in praesenti parliamento edito, seu deinceps edendo, in derogationem Romani pontificis, aut sedis apostolicæ; . . aut in subversionem vel diminutionem jurium . . nostræ ecclesiæ metropolitanæ Cantuariensis, *quomodolibet* consentire," etc.: bold words, which might have cost him his life, had he survived a few years longer.

[2] Wilkins' *Concilia*, iii. 745.

certain articles, so that he might be compelled either to maintain what would be considered as downright heresy, or apparently to sanction all the abuses that he had so often and so earnestly denounced. He refused point blank to subscribe.[1] A second time he was asked, and again refused. A third time he was asked, and again declined absolutely to subscribe. For this obstinacy the Archbishop pronounced him contumacious, and excommunicated him; and Latimer was ordered to be kept in custody in Lambeth till Convocation had determined what further course should be adopted. The articles were the following:—

1. I believe that there is a purgatory to purge the souls of the dead.
2. That the souls in purgatory are holpen by the masses, prayers, and alms of the living.
3. That the saints in heaven pray for us as mediators.
4. That the saints should be honoured.
5. That the invocation of saints is profitable.
6. That pilgrimages and oblations to the relics and sepulchres of saints are meritorious.
7. That persons under a vow of perpetual chastity may not marry without a dispensation from the Pope.
8. That the keys of binding and loosing committed to St. Peter remain with his successors the Bishops of Rome, even though they live wickedly; and were not given to laymen.
9. That fasting, prayer, and other good works merit favour at God's hands.
10. That persons forbidden by the Bishop to preach, should not preach till they have purged themselves before him.
11. That Lent and other fasts should be observed.
12. That in every one of the seven sacraments grace is obtained by those who rightly receive.
13. That consecrations and benedictions are laudable and profitable
14. That the crucifix, and other images of saints should be kept in churches as memorials, and to the honour and worship of Jesus Christ and his saints.

[1] *Penitus recusavit*: Wilkins, *ubi supra*.

15. That it is laudable to deck those images and to burn candles before them.

These articles are nearly the same as those that Crome had been compelled to sign, and had been drawn up with great ingenuity. For Latimer was not yet prepared to give a categorical denial to the truth of any one of them, considered as a simple theological dogma; yet by subscribing them he seemed to be sanctioning all those hideous abuses which he had been for years denouncing. They all belonged to that wide catalogue of what he was accustomed to call "voluntary things;" he had often condemned the abuses which sprung from them; he had endeavoured to show his hearers that they were of far less importance than the plain duties which God had commanded in Holy Scripture; he was even beginning to suspect that they had very little sanction in Scripture; yet he was not prepared to deny their abstract truth or theoretical lawfulness.

Ten days were allowed to elapse before he was again summoned before Convocation. He spent them in the greatest mental distress and uncertainty. To subscribe the articles was to lend his sanction to the preposterous over-esteem in which things merely voluntary, human inventions and institutions, were held; to continue to refuse was to expose his life to danger for what did not sufficiently appear to him to be an adequate cause. In his perplexity he wrote a pathetic letter to Warham. The excitement had begun to tell upon his health; he was distressed at being so long detained from his flock; and he complained of the hard and unfair manner in which he had been treated. He had been originally cited to appear before the Bishop of London on a specific charge; but the

process had been transferred to Convocation, and extraneous questions had been added to the original accusation, till there seemed no prospect of any termination. Why, he asked, should he thus be compelled to subscribe to the opinions of others obtruded upon him? If his preaching had been obscure, he was ready to explain it; for he had never preached anything contrary to the truth, or the decrees of the fathers, or (as far as he knew) the Catholic faith. He had, he admitted, desired to reform the judgment of the common people; and to teach them to distinguish between such duties as God had appointed for every man to walk in, and such as were voluntary, which men undertook of their own strength and pleasure.

"Images, I own, are lawful; it is lawful to go on pilgrimages; it is lawful to pray to saints; it is lawful to care for the souls in purgatory; but these things, which are merely *voluntary*, are to be kept in such moderation, that God's commandments, which are of *necessary* obligation, be not deprived of their just value. But what can be more unseemly, than to employ our preaching in that which God has not commanded; whilst those things which are commanded, thereby fall into neglect?"

"It cannot be denied," he proceeds, "that there are, and have long been amongst us, intolerable abuses. Why, then, should a preacher be required to encourage works which, though they were seldomer (not to say never) performed, I do not see that the Christian religion would lose anything? Is any one blind to the manifest abuses of many things? Does any one see them without regret, without endeavouring to remove them? And when will they be removed if preachers continually recommend the use of the things without ever saying a word against the abuses? In such a case the abuses are sure to prevail and be perpetuated. Christ has ordered us to preach *not* all things which you choose to esteem necessary, but those things which He has commanded. And let us, for God's sake, endeavour with all our energy, to preach the doctrines of God, lest we become corrupt traffickers in preaching rather than true preachers; especially since men are very averse to Divine things,

and so active about their own affairs as to need no spur, being miserably deceived by a mistaken estimate of things, and innate superstition derived from their parents; faults which we shall scarce be able to amend by any preaching, however frequent, however pure and sincere. May God provide the remedy; but in these evil days, those who themselves ought to preach, hinder those who are both willing and able, or compel men to preach who are mere traffickers for gain, so keeping the unfortunate people in superstition and vain confidence. For these reasons, most reverend father, I dare not subscribe the bare propositions submitted to me, because I am unwilling, by any little authority of mine, to perpetuate this popular superstition, lest in so doing I should bring damnation on myself. It is not pride that keeps me from subscribing these articles, which you have so often to my extreme distress asked me to subscribe. It cannot but be blameworthy not to obey the fathers and rulers of the Church; but they also must take heed what and whom they command, since there are occasions on which one must obey God rather than man."[1]

Latimer's arguments were unanswerable, but they probably were of much less avail with Warham than the influence of Latimer's Court friends. Butts and Cromwell, we may believe, were industriously mediating between Latimer and his enemies, seeking to induce *him* to moderate his opinions, and *them* to depart from their demands; and to their intercession probably may be ascribed the compromise that was proposed on Latimer's next appearance before Convocation. On March 21, he again stood before his judges, and the Bishops at once offered to release him from the sentence of excommunication pronounced upon him, if he would consent to subscribe the eleventh and fourteenth articles, of those originally pre-

[1] The original in Latin, admirably vigorous and terse, is preserved in Foxe, vii. 456, etc. In the translations from Latimer's Latin writings, Wordsworth *(Ecclesiastical Biography)* has usually been consulted, as on the whole accurate, but has in no case been implicitly followed.

sented to him, and apologise for what had passed. He assented to the proposal, which, after the severities of the previous autumn, must have seemed to Stokesley an unprecedented exhibition of leniency; and he hoped at last to be restored to freedom. It was not, however, the intention of the Bishops to let him off so easily. He was obliged on bended knees to apologise; to ask pardon from Stokesley, who presided in the absence of Warham; and to read the following ignominious confession:—[1] "My Lords, I do confess that I have misordered myself very far, in that I have so presumptuously and boldly preached, reproving certain things; by which the people that were infirm, hath occasion of ill. Wherefore I ask forgiveness of my misbehaviour; I will be glad to make amends; and I have spoken indiscreetly in vehemence of speaking, and have erred in some things." He then humbly requested to be absolved from the sentence of excommunication pronounced against him; but Convocation was in no hurry to bring matters to a definite conclusion, and remanded him for three weeks, hoping, doubtless, to wring still further concessions from him. He was brought before them again on April 10; and, according to the records of Convocation,[2] he now of his own accord signed[3] all the articles except the eleventh and fourteenth (which he had previously subscribed), and was formally absolved, but was still to remain in London, and was to appear before them yet again ere he received permission to return to his country rectory. The truth was, whispers had reached the ears of the Bishops of a new offence committed by Latimer. His

[1] Wilkins' *Concilia*, iii. p. 747.

[2] The original records of this period, it is well known, are lost; those here cited are the records as given from various sources, in Wilkins' *Concilia*.

[3] *Voluntarie subscripsit.* Wilkins, *ubi supra.*

case had excited considerable public interest, and the report of his submission and recantation had been, no doubt, circulated with triumphant alacrity by those who had been offended at his preaching. Among others, Greenwood, one of his old antagonists at Cambridge, had heard of his fall, and had expressed the greatest exultation at his open abandonment of his doctrines. Latimer was stung to the quick when informed of Greenwood's tone of victorious assumption, and wrote an indignant reply, all the more indignant, perhaps, because his conscience had also been suggesting the same accusations that Greenwood had uttered against him.

"Master Greenwood, I pray your goodness be charitable; in these evil days one must not believe every thing one hears, but, if all be truth that I hear, I must accuse you of a grievous lack of Christian charity. I have plenty of enemies, even if you were anxious to befriend me; plenty of calumnious slander is uttered against me, even if you should remain silent; you shall give an account of every idle word, how much more of every mischievous one! As to my preaching, as I was not conscious of having preached any error, I have not made any public acknowledgment of any error; though, peradventure, more out" [*i.e.* outspoken] "some time than well advised, not treating the 'righteous Word which can save the souls,' with such reverence, majesty, or gravity, as either I ought, or I would have had; nor with due discretion at all times; having respect to the time, and the rudeness and the rashness of the people. . . . And yet, peradventure, the misbehaviour of the people might as well be imputed to other things as to my preaching; but yet I will not be contentious. As to the people, though I will have more respect to their capacity, yet as to my old preaching, I will not change the verity; and I will with all diligence, according to my promise in my writings, do all that is in me to reprove their infirmity."[1]

The letter, of course, came into the hands of the Bishops, and was naturally enough interpreted by them as an

[1] Latimer's *Remains*, p. 356, from the Harleian MSS.

attempt to resile from the articles subscribed. Latimer's submission would be fruitless, if he were allowed to preach the same doctrine as before, and to boast that he had never acknowledged any error in his teaching; he was therefore again summoned before Convocation, on April 15, to answer for his letter to Greenwood. His case was remanded to April 19, and when he appeared before his judges on that day, seeing no hope of any escape from these interminable proceedings, he appealed to Henry. This bold step, which was a practical recognition of the great declaration of the previous year that the King was the supreme head of the Church and clergy of England, was no doubt recommended by Cromwell, and was worthy of Cromwell's sagacity.[1] It was flattering Henry on his weakest point, and was certain to secure his protection, except for gross and palpable heresy, such as could not yet be charged against Latimer. There is reason to believe that he was conducted nto Henry's presence on thus appealing to his jurisdiction, and was required to explain his conduct and doctrines to the Sovereign, who specially delighted in a theological discussion; and it was probably Henry's advice that guided Latimer in his subsequent proceeding. Such at least seems to be implied in a document in the State Paper Office, which is unhappily in a state of tantalizing mutilation.[2]

[1] Anne Boleyn is also said to have exerted her influence in Latimer's favour, but of this no authentic proof has ever been adduced.

[2] The document is given here from the Rolls, *Chapter House Papers*, A. 1. 7. 165. The parts supplied from conjecture are in italics:—

"Doctor Wilson, chaplain to the King's Grace and Confessor, before divers worshipful men of Bristow said that *when Mr.* Latymer was before the bishops he appealed to the *King's Grace*. To whom the King's Grace said, 'Mr. Latymer, I am *sure ye* have good learning, it were pity but ye *should hereafter preach* much better than ye have, for you *have been forced to recant* and to be abjured, and I will not take *upon me now to be* a suitor to the bishops for you, *unless you promise to do* penance as ye have deserved, *and never to preach any* such things again. Ye *shall else only get from me* a fagot to burn you.'"

On the understanding, therefore, that Latimer was to make a full and explicit apology, and to promise for the future more care in his preaching, Henry approved of his appeal; and Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, was instructed to intimate to Convocation the King's desire that Latimer should be forgiven and received into favour.

Once more, therefore, for the last time, Latimer appeared before Convocation, on April 22, and on his knees acknowledged that "whereas he had aforetime confessed, that he had heretofore erred, meaning that it was only error of discretion, he had since better seen his own acts, and searched them more deeply, and doth acknowledge that he hath not erred only in discretion, but also in doctrine, and that he was not called before the said lords but upon good and just grounds, and hath been by them charitably and favourably treated; and whereas he hath aforetime misreported of the lords, he acknowledges that he hath done ill in it, and desires them humbly to forgive him, and whereas he is not of ability to make them recompense, he will pray for them."[1] On this submission, he was by the King's express desire received into favour, with the provision that if he relapsed, the old charges should be revived. Finally, having promised to obey the law, and keep the mandates of the Church, he was absolved by Stokesley; and once more, after three months' cruel annoyance, he was a free man.

This is the darkest page in Latimer's history, and no attempt has here been made in any way to conceal or extenuate his weakness. Something might no doubt be urged in his defence: he was constitutionally weak; he was over-persuaded by his friends; he was overawed by Henry;

[1] Wilkins, iii. 748.

he had not been guilty of apostacy, for he still honestly adhered to almost all the doctrines of the Romish Church. But making all possible allowance for these considerations, it cannot be denied that Latimer's conduct on his trial was unworthy of his character and of his position. Caution and prudence in preserving life are admirable virtues; but there are emergencies when it becomes all true men to face danger, and to recognise that there are causes more sacred even than life. His timidity could not but have a disastrous effect wherever his influence extended; the friends of the Reformation would be perplexed and alarmed at this weakness in one who seemed their bravest leader; its enemies would be more than ever convinced that, by the proper threats of severity, heresy might be effectually crushed. Before Latimer left London for his country parish, he had an interview with a layman lying in Newgate under sentence of death for teaching Reformed doctrines, which must have made him feel heartily ashamed of his culpable caution, and must have caused him to ask himself whether in his excessive prudence he had not almost been guilty of "denying Christ."

On the same day, April 19, when Latimer was explaining his letter to Greenwood before Convocation, Stokesley's Vicar-General was presiding at the trial of Bainham, a relapsed heretic. The son of a Gloucestershire knight, a learned lawyer, a man of eminent charity and piety, Bainham was well known and highly esteemed as "a singular example to his profession."[1] He was a diligent and devout reader of Holy Scripture; he frequented the preaching of Crome and Latimer; he had married the widow of Simon Fish, the author of the famous "Sup-

[1] Foxe, vol. iv. p. 697.

plication of Beggars;" and was of course a suspected man. In the end of 1531, he had been accused to More, and was, by the Chancellor's order, taken to his residence in Chelsea, and whipped at the "Tree of Troth," in his garden. Bainham, however, was resolute, and neither confessed nor recanted anything. He refused to name any of his associates, or to disclose where his books were concealed. Enraged at his firmness, More sent him to the Tower, and stood over him, it is said, while he was racked till he was almost lame: but Bainham still remained unmovable. His wife, too, was sent to the Fleet, and an attempt was made to extract a confession from her; but from such a woman, that had been twice "so husbanded," no secrets were to be wrung by any indignity. Bainham was again examined before More and Stokesley; and his answers on the doctrines of purgatory and the invocation of saints, exhibited a boldness and a knowledge of Scripture, such as any of the Reforming preachers might have envied. Finally, after two months' further imprisonment, he was induced to make a modified recantation, and was fined, and set at liberty in February, 1532, just when Stokesley had directed all his energies to the hunting down of Latimer.

But his conscience refused to be pacified; he felt that he had denied his Master, and like Peter, he wept, and went about bewailing his fall. He had scandalized the faithful community with whom he worshipped, and he felt that some apology was due to them. He went accordingly to the warehouse in Bow Lane, where this first Protestant congregation assembled to worship, and asked them to forgive him. Even this did not satisfy him; he resolved in a still more public manner to signify his contrition. On the following Sunday, with Tyndale's New Testament in his hand, and the same writer's *Obedience of a Christian Man*

in his bosom, he entered his parish church of St. Austin's, and standing up in his place before the whole congregation, confessed with many tears that he had denied his Saviour, and warned them all to beware of being seduced by the example of his weakness. "Such a hell as was in his bosom," he declared, "he would not again feel for all the world's wealth." It was not difficult to foresee the result of such proceedings, which were a formal challenge to Stokesley; Bainham was again apprehended, and refusing all inducements to recant, he was condemned to be burned at Smithfield on the last day of April.

Latimer had just been set free after his humiliating submission to Convocation; and before leaving London, he, at the urgent entreaty of his friends, Ralph and William Morice, paid a visit to Bainham in Newgate, in order to understand the precise ground of his condemnation, which, it seems, was somewhat disputed, and to comfort him to take his death patiently. On the evening, therefore, before the day appointed for the martyrdom, Latimer and his companions visited Newgate, and when they "were come down into the dungeon, where all things seemed utterly dark, there they found Bainham, sitting upon a couch of straw, with a book and a wax candle in his hand, praying and reading thereupon."[1] Latimer, full of that unhappy caution which had been inspired into him by his Court friends, and which he cherished as the only defence of his conduct, began the conversation. "Mr. Bainham, we hear say that you are condemned for heresy to be burnt, and many men are in doubt wherefore you should suffer; and I, for my part, am desirous to understand the cause of your death; assuring you that I do not allow that any man

[1] Strype, *Eccl. Mem.* from the Harleian MSS., 422.

should consent to his own death, unless he had a right cause to die in. Let not vain-glory overcome you in a matter that men deserve not to die for; for therein you shall neither please God, do good to yourself nor your neighbour; and better it were for you to submit yourself to the ordinances of men, than so rashly to finish your life without good ground. And, therefore, we pray you to let us to understand the articles that you are condemned for."

Bainham recapitulated the articles. He had spoken of Thomas-à-Becket, the great patron saint of the South East of England, as a traitor. "That," said Latimer, emphatically, "is no cause at all worthy for a man to take his death upon."

"I spoke also against purgatory," Bainham proceeded, "that there was no such thing; but that it picked men's purses; and against satisfactory masses" (*i.e.* against the doctrine that the mass was an atonement or sacrifice for sins).

"Marry," said Latimer, "in these articles your conscience may be so stayed, that you may seem rather to die' [*i.e.* it may seem your duty rather to die] "in the defence thereof, than to recant both against your conscience, and the Scriptures also. But yet beware of vain-glory; for the devil will be ready now to infect you therewith, when you shall come into the multitude of the people."

After thus cautioning him against the imaginary danger of sacrificing his life simply out of pure vain-glory, Latimer encouraged him to take his death quietly and patiently. Bainham thanked him heartily, and having doubtless perceived Latimer's own weak point, he added, "*I* likewise do exhort *you to stand to the defence of the truth;* for you that shall be left behind had need of

comfort" [strength] "also, the world being so dangerous as it is;" and so spake many comfortable words to Latimer. After some further converse they departed; and the next day (April 30) Bainham was burned, constant and undaunted to the end.

In the beginning of May, therefore, we suppose that Latimer returned, after an absence of four months, to resume the duties of his parish. The words of Bainham, as we shall see, had not been like water spilt upon the ground; they had produced a deep impression on Latimer's mind, and compelled him not only to pass in judgment his own conduct, contrasting so strongly with that of Bainham, but also to examine more carefully than he had yet done, the Scriptural authority for those doctrines which he was still prepared to admit as true, while protesting against the gross abuses by which they were accompanied. He began to inquire whether the doctrines themselves were not abuses, whether purgatory was not, as Bainham had styled it, an ecclesiastical device invented to pick men's purses, and totally destitute of any Scriptural sanction. For some time after his return, we have no authentic record of his proceedings: his parish furnished him with interesting pastoral labour; his leisure hours would be spent in thought, in study, in prayer for Divine guidance and help, and in a more careful examination of the Scriptural grounds of his religious teaching.

The two great controversies which had so long convulsed and divided England, the divorce, and the question of the Royal supremacy which had sprung out of it, were meantime drawing to a close. In the month of May, just as Latimer had returned home, it was enacted that "no constitution should be promulgated by the clergy unless the King had first approved the same." The legislative powers

of Convocation were thus annihilated; and the Church that had so often bearded the Majesty of England was muzzled and silenced. As before, Convocation attempted to throw an air of dignity over their fall. They declared that "having special trust and confidence in Henry's most high and excellent wisdom, his princely goodness and fervent zeal to the promotion of God's honour and Christian religion, and specially in his incomparable learning far exceeding that of all other kings that they had read of,"[1] they promised that *during the King's life* they would forbear to enact any constitutions without his licence. Henry was too conscious of his own power to grudge them this little piece of bravado; and on May 15, the clergy assented to the Act which terminated their independent legislative authority in England. Next day, Sir Thomas More resigned his Chancellorship, unwilling to survive the glory of that Church of which he had been for some years the chief ornament and defence.

The long-drawn divorce controversy was also verging to its termination. Negotiations were still prosecuted at the Papal Court, but with no great energy. The Pope's counsellors were suspicious of Henry's policy. The abrogation of the power of Convocation filled them with distrust. The story of Latimer's troubles, also, had reached Rome; and the Pope grievously complained that a priest who had been imprisoned by the Archbishop of Canterbury had been set free on appealing to the King.[2] Everything portended a speedy rupture. Henry, who had waited with exemplary patience till all hope of obtaining the Papal sanction to his divorce was desperate, at last determined to take the final step by marrying Anne Boleyn.

[1] Burnet, vol. vi., p. 50.
[2] Lord Herbert's *Henry VIII.*, p. 261.

An unforeseen occurrence delayed the marriage for a time. On August 23, 1532, Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, died; and until a successor was duly consecrated by the authority of the customary Papal bulls, it would have been the height of rashness to take any step that would completely alienate the Pope. Writers of history have enlarged upon Henry's violent passion for Anne Boleyn, and his uncontrollable temper, impatient of all opposition; but in truth Henry proceeded throughout with the greatest caution and prudence, and never allowed his emotions to lead him to any action that might create embarrassment in the succession to the throne. His proposed marriage was therefore delayed till the Bulls for consecrating the new Archbishop were procured from Rome. Much depended upon the character of Warham's successor; for though shorn of some of his dignity, the Primate of England could not but exert an important influence on the Church at such a crisis as that which was now imminent. Henry's choice, directed by a Higher Hand, fell on Cranmer, and he could not have made a wiser selection. In point of learning, prudence, piety and integrity, no man in England was better qualified than Cranmer to discharge the duties of so responsible an office; and to his influence, direct or indirect, may be ascribed most of the beneficial measures of Henry's subsequent reign. Cranmer at first declined the offered advancement, but on Henry's renewed and repeated request that he would accept it, he at last consented; and it only remained to procure the Bulls for his consecration from Clement.

In the beginning of January, 1533, accordingly, Henry requested Clement to forward the necessary Bulls. But scarcely were the royal messengers despatched when a Bull arrived from Rome, written by the Pope some two months before,

under the inspiration of the Emperor (who had heard some rumour of Henry's contemplated marriage), ordering Henry in the most peremptory manner to dismiss Anne forthwith from the Court. The tone of the despatch was too much for Henry to bear; it was the crowning insult, and at once precipitated the conclusion. As soon as he had received it, he was privately married to Anne, by Rowland Lee, one of his chaplains; the marriage being kept secret, no doubt, lest it should be known at Rome before the Bulls for Cranmer's consecration were sent off to England. This irrevocable step was taken on January 25, 1533.

In the beginning of March the long-expected Bulls, the last that Henry ever solicited, arrived; and on March 30, Cranmer was formally consecrated. As Henry had no longer any reason for courting the favour of the Pope, the final step for settling the divorce was now taken in Parliament. It was declared that "the Crown of England was imperial, and the nation a complete body in itself, with full power to give justice in all causes spiritual and temporal: appeals to Rome," it was added, "had been found to be fruitful in expense and annoyance, and delay and miscarriage of justice;" therefore it was enacted that all causes, whether they concerned the King or any of his subjects, were in future to be determined in England, notwithstanding any inhibitions or Bulls or appeals to Rome; and any one procuring a Bull hereafter was liable to the penalties of the Law of Provisors.[1] Nothing now remained but to pronounce the formal divorce of Henry and Catherine. Cranmer was, accordingly, authorized to hold a court in the monastery of Dunstable, near Catherine's residence at Ampthill, and finally dispose of the question that had disturbed

[1] Statutes of the Realm.

the peace of Europe for six years. Sentence of divorce was of course speedily pronounced; for the question had been practically decided years before, and only awaited a judge with full authority to declare that the marriage, as contracted in opposition to the laws of God, had been, *ab initio*, null and void. A few days afterwards, Cranmer confirmed Henry's marriage with Anne; and on May 28, the new Queen was conducted to the Tower with a gorgeous state and magnificence; "So comely done as never was like in any time nigh to our remembrance."[1] On Whit Sunday (June 1), she was solemnly crowned in Westminster Abbey. Four months later, on September 7, she gave birth to her famous daughter, Elizabeth, to the intense joy of Henry, who at once caused her to be created Princess of Wales; and rejoiced in her birth not only as strengthening the succession, but as a token that Heaven had not disapproved of a marriage which many of his subjects had threatened with the curse of God.

All these occurrences in the political world were favourable to the progress of the Reformation in England. The long-established Papal supremacy had been abolished; the power of the Church had been seriously curtailed; and though Henry still remained as sincerely attached as ever to the old theology, the persons of chief influence around him, Cromwell, Cranmer, and Anne Boleyn, were all more or less favourably disposed towards the doctrines of the Reformers. Perhaps it was this which emboldened Latimer in the spring of 1533 to break the silence which he had observed since his return from London, and to preach more clearly and openly than before against the superstitions and abuses which constituted almost the

[1] See Cranmer's Letter to Hawkins (*Remains*, Letter 14.)

whole of the popular religion of those around him. In March, 1533, at the invitation of several priests, he preached in Bristol on the second Sunday in Lent (March 9), in the Churches of St. Nicholas and the Black Friars; and on the following day in St. Thomas's Church. Whether from the unusual boldness of his words, or the peculiarly excitable temperament of his hearers, his sermons produced a wonderful effect. All Bristol rang with them; and the citizens were divided into two rival factions, who fiercely attacked, or boldly defended the Reformer's opinions, as they were themselves disposed to reject or to favour the Reformation. The hostile party among the priests were alarmed at this outbreak of zeal, and determined, if possible, to prevent its growth by the interposition of authority. Complaint was made to Convocation in a letter, which explains to us the tenor of Latimer's sermons in Bristol.

"Right Worshipful Master,[1] it may like you to be advertised, that upon the second Sunday this Lent, at Bristol, there preached one Latimer. And, as it is reported, he hath done much hurt among the people by his said preaching, and soweth errors. His fame is there, and in most parts of the diocese. He said that our Lady was a sinner, and that she ought not to be worshipped of the people, nor any of the saints. Exclaimeth upon pilgrimage. And also where the Gospel the said Sunday, specifying of the woman of Canaan's calling upon Christ to help her, and how the disciples prayed for her, saying, 'Send her away, because she crieth after us;' the same Latimer declared, in his said preaching, that the woman of Canaan, by the desire and prayer of the disciples of Christ for her, rather fared the worse than the better. And divers other opinions vented in his preaching, fully against the determination of the Church, whereby he hath very sore infect the said town of Bristol, as it is reported. The said Latimer is assigned for to preach again at Bristol, the Wednesday in Easter week, except by your command-

[1] Peter Vannes, Archdeacon of Worcester, is conjectured by Strype to be the person here addressed.

ment unto the Dean there, he be denied and forbid to preach. The good Catholic people in the said town do abhor all such his preaching. The fellow dwelleth within the diocese of Bath" [Salisbury], "and certain times cometh into my Lord's diocese of Worcester. This doing such hurt, I am required to certify your mastership of this wretched being in his abusions; and that ye would write unto the Dean of Bristol, to forbid and deny the said Latimer to preach there, or within any part of my said Lord's diocese. . . . . This xviii. day of March.

"Richard Brown, Priest."[1]

The suggestions of the writer were speedily put in execution. On March 26, it was complained in Convocation, that notwithstanding his submission and promise of obedience in the previous year, Latimer had again preached in Bristol against the teaching of the Church; and, at the instance of Gardiner, a copy of his submission was transmitted to Bristol, to be employed against him in any way that might seem most advisable.[2] This was of course a "lame and impotent conclusion," not likely to arrest Latimer in his career; but Convocation was painfully sensible that its power was now abridged. A more effectual expedient, however, was still within their reach; and though the Mayor himself had appointed Latimer to preach again in Bristol at Easter, a prohibition was issued forbidding him to preach anywhere within the diocese of Worcester, without the Bishop's licence; and thus he was for the time effectually silenced. Having thus made sure that their dreaded opponent could not reply to them, the good Catholics of Bristol next procured "certain preachers to blatter against him;" Wilson, one of Henry's chaplains; Powell, an ardent upholder of the Papal supremacy; and above all, Hubbardin, the great

[1] Strype, *Eccl. Mem.* I. 248, from *Cleopatra*, E. V.
[2] Wilkins' *Concilia*, iii. 755.

clerical buffoon of the day,[1] whose vulgar oratory and frantic gesticulations were expected to captivate the ignorant populace. Latimer was denounced as a heretic, and almost an atheist; and his opinions were perverted and misrepresented in the grossest manner. He did not lack defenders, however, and the controversy in Bristol became daily more embittered, and threatened to endanger the peace of the town. Nothing was heard but the din of theological discussion. He had attacked pilgrimages, and other superstitious practices; and his opponents exhausted their ingenuity in devising arguments in their defence. Some of their arguments were amusingly whimsical. Pilgrimages, for example, were defended from the passage of Scripture which promises to reward a hundred-fold all who forsake house and brethren for Christ's sake. "Whosoever goeth on pilgrimage to John Thorne, to our Lady of Walsingham, to Saint Anne in the Wood," so Dr. Powell argued, "left his father and mother and brethren for the time that he was from home; therefore our Lord's promise applied to him, and therefore, let him put in the box at the shrine of the saint, whatever he would, he should receive a hundred times as much more in the present world, and in the world to come everlasting life!"[2]

Latimer was naturally indignant at being deprived of any opportunity of defending himself, and explaining his

[1] So Foxe represents him; and as it is the fashion at the present time to ridicule Foxe and to doubt his veracity, I may mention that in the Rolls House there is a memorial from the inhabitants of Bristol to the Mayor, complaining of the indecent extravagance of Hubbardin's language in his sermons. They depose that by way of illustrating (!) the doctrine of the Trinity, he "compared Christ to a foal, an ass, a bolt, a faggot-stick, and such other naughty sayings beside and contrary to all good Scripture, and such villainy that abhorreth the ears of Christian people." *Chapter House Papers*, A. I. 9. 117.

[2] *Chapter House Papers*, A. 1. 7. 157, fragment of a letter of Latimer's.

real opinions. He brought his opponents before the Mayor and Council, and challenged them to establish any of the accusations they so freely launched against him, but they made no answer; "they had both place and time," he complains, "to slander me and to belie me, but they had neither place nor time to hear me, when I was ready to justify all that I had said." [1] One of his adversaries, however, was bold enough to hold communication with him; John Hilsey, Prior of the Black Friars, came and discussed his teaching with him, and was so satisfied with his explanation of his doctrines, that he became his friend, and was subsequently one of his most efficient supporters in promoting the Reformation in England.[2]

At last the disturbance in Bristol became so formidable as to attract the notice of Cromwell; and, in the beginning of July, Commisioners were appointed to investigate the whole proceedings, and to report to the Council. Latimer's opponents had allowed their zeal to outrun their discretion; in denouncing his heresy, they had made themselves amenable to the law. They had condemned the recent legislation of Parliament, and had censured Henry's divorce, and his marriage with Anne Boleyn. Powell had even gone so far as to declare that Henry, by putting away his first wife, and marrying another without the dispensation of the Church, "corrupted and infected the people with evil example of living;" and Hubbardin had maintained the supremacy and infallibility of the Papal See, with sundry oblique reflections on the proceedings of the King and the Parliament, in such a manner as to occasion no little offence and grief to all loyal subjects in Bristol.[3]

[1] *Chapter House Papers;* an unfinished letter of Latimer's.

[2] *Letters on the Suppression of the Monasteries.*

[3] "The sayings of Mr. Hubberdin and Dr. Powell in the pulpit."—Rolls, *Chapter House Papers*, A. 1. 9. 111, &c.

The Commissioners examined many witnesses, and sent voluminous evidence to Cromwell, much of which is still preserved among the State Papers. The champions of the Church began to discover, to their sad discomfiture, that the good old days, when a heretic might be pleasantly hunted to death, were gone. Already the legislation of Parliament had completely altered the position of the Church in England, and the clergy were no longer able to carry matters with so high a hand. The Mayor of Bristol caused several of the priests who had been the most vehement to be apprehended and imprisoned; others found it convenient to disappear for a time from the neighbourhood; Hubbardin's vulgar eloquence could not save him from the humiliation of being sent to jail; and, on the whole, Latimer's enemies were driven with disgrace from the field.[1] In every point they were foiled. They had procured a prohibition against his preaching without the licence of the Bishop of the diocese in which Bristol was situated; but Cranmer gave him licence to preach anywhere within the province of Canterbury; and he seems to have been again permitted to make a public exposition in Bristol of the doctrines which had excited so much controversy. Nor was this all; the antagonists of Latimer had rendered themselves objects of suspicion in their turn to Cromwell and Cranmer, and the latter hesitated for some time to allow even Hilsey to preach in the province of Canterbury, until he was satisfied that he had not offended against the Royal prerogative, as Hubbardin and Powell had done.[2] According to a local chronicler, Cranmer visited Bristol in the autumn, and remained there several days, "reforming of many things that were amiss, and

[1] *Bristol Chronicle;* quoted in Sayer's *History of Bristol*, vol. ii. p. 218.
[2] Cranmer's *Remains*, Letter xxix.

preaching in St. Augustine's Abbey, and other places."[1] We can imagine how Latimer must have felt comforted by the presence of a friendly adviser, into whose ear he could pour the story of all his wrongs, and on whose support he could confidently rely in all difficulties. One favour only was wanting to complete Latimer's victory. His antagonists had been silenced; he had been restored to full liberty as a preacher; but the King might have been prejudiced against him by the reports which his enemies maliciously circulated, and he was anxious to have an opportunity of again preaching before him, to show how much he had been misrepresented and belied.[2] Even this wish he was enabled to gratify, through the assistance of Cranmer, who was anxious, for his own sake, to convince Henry that he had not been guilty of any indiscretion in granting Latimer free licence to preach anywhere within the province of Canterbury, in spite of the prohibition of any of the suffragan bishops.

This fierce six months' controversy was not without its beneficial influence upon Latimer's theology. It had snapped a few more of the bonds by which he was still held fast to the old traditional doctrinal system, which he was so loath to leave. It made him feel how untenable was the position to which he had so fondly clung; how utterly baseless was his cherished belief, that all that was required was to purge the Church of a few gross abuses that had sprung up, in the course of ages, around her venerable creeds and her devout ritual. It has become customary of late for men to regret what they call the extreme and unnecessary violence which accompanied the Reformation, and to wish that the Reformers had contented themselves with stripping away what was manifestly false and super-

[1] *Bristol Chronicle;* quoted in Sayer's *Memoirs of Bristol,* vol. ii. p. 215.
[2] Latimer's Letter to Morice, *Remains,* p. 366.

stitious, without introducing such sweeping and radical changes into the doctrine and worship of the Church. The history of Latimer shows the groundlessness of this superficial remark. Never was Reformer more eager to retain every belief and practice which could plead any sanction of antiquity in its favour, or more careful to guard himself against the suspicion that he was opposing the legitimate use of any custom, while he was denouncing its abuse; yet his caution in no way disarmed the violence of his opponents; every petty abuse was a rich source of revenue to some ecclesiastical fraternity, and the most modest proposals for a Reformation of religion were denounced as the results of malicious and almost diabolical hatred of the truth.

The sermons of Latimer, which excited the ferment in Bristol, have not been preserved, but his defence of his opinions against the attacks of Powell, and his letters on the same subject to Hubbardin and Morice, have fortunately come down to us, and afford us an interesting view of his opinions at this time, at which we shall glance before passing on to consider the remainder of his career as rector of West Kington. Hubbardin had condemned the *new learning* as being of the devil, and not of God, and had had the effrontery to allege, in proof of his assertion, that the professors of the new learning lived naughtily, and were in the habit of persecuting priests. Latimer indignantly replied:—

"Your assertions are great blasphemies, and abominable lies, injurious both to God and His word, and (I fear) sin against the Holy Ghost. Ye call the Scripture the *new learning*, which I am sure is older than any learning which you wot to be the old. I pray you, was not the Scripture, if ye would contend, before your most ancient doctors, that ye can allege to have written of it? Was it not, afore they wrote upon it, better received, more purely understand, of more

mighty working, than it is now, or since they wrote upon it? In St. Paul's time, when there were no writers upon the New Testament, but that the plain story was then newly put forth, were there not more converted by (I dare boldly say) two parties than there be at this hour, I will not say Christian men, but that profess the name of Christ? Is it not now the same Word as it was then? Is not the same Schoolmaster that taught them to understand it then (which, as St. Peter saith, is the Spirit of God) alive, as well as He was then? Doth He not favour us now as well as He did then? Have we Him not now, as well as we had then? . . . . . If you will say that you condemn not the Scripture, but Tyndale's translation, therein ye show yourself contrary to your words, for ye have condemned it in all other common tongues; so that it is plain that it is the *Scripture*, and not the translation that ye bark against, calling it *new learning*."[1]

Powell's accusations were more voluminous, and had some better foundation in fact, than Hubbardin's shameless diatribe. He had accused Latimer of asserting that the Virgin Mary was a sinner; and Latimer thus explains what he had taught on a subject, which has always been the centre of so much corruption and superstition. He had referred to the matter because some "priests had given so much to our Lady of Devotion without judgment, as though she had not needed Christ to save her. To prove Christ her Saviour, to make Christ a whole Saviour of all that be or shall be saved, I reasoned after this manner, that either she was a sinner or no sinner; if she were a sinner, then she was *redeemed* or *delivered* from sin by Christ, as other sinners be; if she were no sinner then she was *preserved* from sin by Christ; so that Christ saved her, and was her necessary Saviour, whether she sinned or no." Some of the Fathers had maintained that the Virgin was not without sin, but on that point Latimer refused to enter into discussion; he was willing to adhere to the common belief, but to his purpose it was quite immaterial

[1] Latimer's *Remains*, pp. 317-321.

to prove that she was or was not a sinner; in either case she still needed Christ as her Saviour. But "what need you to speak of this?" his opponents asked.

"Great need," he replied; "when men cannot be content that she was a creature saved, but as it were a Saviouress,[1] not needing salvation, it is necessary to set her in her degree, to the glory of Christ, Creator and Saviour of all that be or shall be saved. I go not about to make our Lady a sinner, but to have Christ her Saviour. I would be as loth to dishonour our Lady as they, for verily she is worthy to be honoured. But they should both please and honour our Lady much better, to leave their sinful living, and keep themselves from sinfulness, as our Lady did, than so sinfully to lie to make our Lady no sinner: which, if they do not, they shall go to the devil certainly, though they believe that our Lady was no sinner, never so surely."

He had been accused of speaking disrespectfully of the *Ave Maria*.

"I never denied it," he rejoins; "I know it was a heavenly saluting or greeting of our Lady; but yet it is not properly a prayer, as the Lord's Prayer is. Saluting or greeting, lauding or praising, is not properly praying. The angel was sent to greet our Lady, and to annunciate and show the good-will of God towards her (and therefore t is called the Annunciation of our Lady); and not to pray to her. Shall the Father of heaven pray to our Lady? When the angel spake it, it was not properly a prayer: and is it not the same thing now that it was then? But as I deny not that we may say the *Ave Maria* (though we be not bidden of God as the angel was), yet it is but a superstition to think that a *Pater Noster* cannot be well said without an *Ave Maria* at its heel; and to teach men to say twenty *Ave Marias* for one *Pater Noster*, is not to speak the Word of God. One *Ave Maria* well said, and devoutly, with affection, sense, and understanding, is better than twenty-five said superstitiously. For we fantasy as though the very work and labour of flummering the *Ave Maria* is very acceptable to our Lady, and the more, the more acceptable; not passing" [regarding] "*how* they be said, but *that* they be said. . . . . The devil is crafty, and we frail and prone to superstition and idolatry."

[1] "There is an anthem sung in Bristol, wherein she is called *Salvatrix ac redemptrix*." Fragment of a letter from Latimer, in *Chapter House Papers*, A. 1. 7, 158.

He had maintained, so it was alleged, that *saints were not to be honoured.*

"The word *saints*," he explained, "was diversely taken of the vulgar people; images of saints are called saints; and inhabiters of heaven are called saints. Now, by honouring of saints is meant praying to saints. Take honouring so" [in this sense], "and images for saints, so saints are not to be honoured; that is to say, dead images are not to be prayed unto: for they have neither ears to hear withal, nor tongues to speak withal, nor heart to think withal. They can neither help me nor mine ox; neither my head nor my tooth; nor work any miracle for me, one no more than another. And yet I showed the good use of them to be laymen's books, as they be called, reverently to look upon them, to remember the things that are signified by them. And yet I would not have them so costly and curiously gilded and decked, that the quick image of God (for whom Christ shed His blood, and to whom whatsoever is done Christ reputeth it done to Himself) lack necessaries, and be unprovided for by that occasion; for then the layman doth abuse his book. A man may read upon his book, though it be not very curiously gilded; and in the day-time a man may behold it without many candles, if he be not blind. Now I say, there be two manner of mediators, one by way of redemption, another by way of intercession; and I said, that these saints, that is to say, images called saints, be mediators neither way.

"As touching *pilgrimages*, I said, that all idolatry, superstition, error, false faith, and hope in the images, must be pared away, before they can be well done; household looked upon, poor Christian people provided for, restitutions made, all ordinance of God discharged, or ever they can be well done. They shall never be required of us, though they be never done: and yet idolatry may be committed in doing them.

"As touching *the saints in heaven*, I said, they be not our mediators by way of redemption; for so Christ alone is our mediator and theirs both: so that the blood of martyrs hath nothing to do by way of *redemption;* the blood of Christ is enough for a thousand worlds. But by way of *intercession*, saints in heaven may be mediators, and pray for us: as I think they do when we call not upon them; for they be charitable, and need no spurs; and we have no open bidding of God in Scripture to call upon them, as we have to call upon God; nor yet we may call upon them with any diffidence or mistrust in God; for God is more charitable, more merciful, more able, more ready to help than them all. . . The saints were not saints by praying to saints, but

by believing in Him that made them saints; and as they were saints, so may we be saints: yea, there be many saints that never prayed to saints. And yet I deny not but we may pray to saints; but rather to Him, which can make us saints, which calleth us to Him, biddeth us call upon Him, promiseth help, cannot deceive us and break His promise. . . . . The chiefest honouring of saints is to know their holy living, and to follow them as they followed Christ."

It was said that he had *denied the existence of purgatory.* But he answers:—

"I showed the state and condition of them that be in purgatory; therefore I denied it not: they have charity so that they cannot lose it; they cannot dishonour God; they can neither displease God, nor be displeased with God; cannot be dissevered from God; cannot die, nor be in peril of death; cannot be damned, nor be in peril of damnation; cannot but be in surety of salvation."

And then he adds, with his usual ready humour:—

"I had rather be in purgatory than in the Bishop of London's prison, for divers causes.

"First. In this I might die bodily for lack of meat and drink: in that I could not.

"*Item.* In this I might die ghostly for fear of pain, or lack of good counsel; there I could not.

"*Item.* In this I might be in peril and danger of death: in that I could not.

"*Item.* In this I might murmur and grudge against God: in that I could not.

"*Item.* In this I might be judged to perpetual prison, as they call it: in that I could not.

"*Item.* In this I might be craftily handled: in that I could not.

"*Item.* In this I might be brought to bear a fagot: in that I could not.

"*Item.* In this my lord and his chaplains might manacle me by night: in that they could not.

"*Item.* In this they might strangle me, and say that I hanged myself:[1] in that they could not.

"*Ergo.* I had rather to be there than here. For though the fire

[1] Alluding to Richard Hunne, who was found hanged in his cell, and whom the inquest acquitted of suicide. Foxe, iv., 191.

be called never so hot, yet if the Bishop's two fingers" [*i.e.*, episcopal benediction] "can shake away a piece, a friar's cowl another part, and *scala cœli*[1] altogether, I will never found abbey, college, nor charity for that purpose.

"Provision for purgatory hath brought thousands to hell. Debts have not been paid; restitution of evil-gotten goods and lands hath not been made; Christian people are neglected and suffered to perish; last wills unfulfilled and broken; God's ordinances set aside. Thus we have gone to hell with masses, dirges, and ringing of many a bell. And unless we do what God hath commanded us, though our soul-priests sing till they be blear-eyed, say till they have worn their tongues to the stumps, neither their singings nor their sayings shall bring us out of hell, whither we shall go for contemning of God's forbiddings. Purgatory's iniquity hath replenished hell, and left heaven almost empty. If purgatory were purged of all that it hath gotten by setting aside restitution, and robbing of Christ, it would be but a poor purgatory; so poor, that it should not be able to feed so fat, and trick up so many idle and slothful lubbers."

These were the boldest words that Latimer had yet uttered, and it is not difficult to understand that they would awaken an energetic response in the hearts of the good citizens of Bristol, who had so long been pillaged by hordes of corrupt ecclesiastics. Everyone suffered by the abuses of the Church; the poorest were not exempt from plunder; every occurrence in life was considered a fitting occasion for adding something to the inexhaustible treasures which the clergy too often spent in indolence and luxury. Hence the indignation with which they turned upon any preacher, who ventured to denounce those profitable abuses which had been for ages the fruitful source of their enormous revenues. "This is the wasp that doth sting them," said Latimer, with his usual homely shrewdness, "and maketh them to swell." The times had some-

[1] A Church of the Virgin Mary at Rome, so called: masses sung at the altar in that Church for the souls in purgatory were so efficacious that they were immediately released from pain and passed into the everlasting joys of heaven.

what changed; and they had experienced a humiliating defeat in their attempts to silence and punish Latimer; Parliament had somewhat encroached upon their previous glorious privilege of persecuting all who exposed their ignorance or denounced their corruption; but the persecuting spirit still remained strong in them, and unable to gratify it in any other way, they vented it in some wretched doggerel, the sentiment of which is more readily perceivable than either the rhyme or the reason. Two stanzas will probably satisfy the taste of the reader:—

"Oh! thou ravishing wolf in a lamb's skin,
What mischief increaseth daily thee by!
For many souls to the Devil thou dost win,
Beseeching of thy abominable heresy.
Yet faithful men thy words may defy;
The which is more to thy rebuke and shame
So to impair the poor Christian name.

"The blessed pure Virgin and mother to Christ,
Thou saidst in preaching a sinner was she;
And therein like a false heretick thou liest;
For she is a holy virgin, and ever shall be.
Pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te.
This text Christ said by her, as in Scripture is told.
Wherefore it is pity thou shouldst die for cold."[1]

In October of this year, Latimer was again in London, at the invitation of Cranmer; and on the 3rd of that month he preached in the church of the Augustine Friars. Stokesley had, indeed, by an edict of April 24, in this year, interdicted all preachers, seculars or regulars, from officiating anywhere within his diocese, whether in places exempt or not exempt, without his special licence,[2] and had

[1] The curious reader may see the whole in Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, i. pt. 2. p. 180.

[2] Stokesley's *Register*. A copy is in the Rolls, A. I. 15, p. 164.

subsequently inhibited Latimer by name, on account of his "fraudulent and pestiferous preaching, whereby he corrupteth the people, and seduceth them from the received doctrine of the Church." Latimer, however, had Cranmer's express licence to preach in any part of the province of Canterbury; and the prior of the Augustinian Monastery, George Brown (afterwards the first Protestant Archbishop of Dublin), was favourable to the Reformed doctrines; and therefore Stokesley's thunder was not much regarded. Stokesley was, of course, enraged at this fresh contempt of his authority; and the next day he issued a still more peremptory inhibition, strictly forbidding, "under the pain and penalty contained in the law and provincial constitutions," any of his clergy from allowing the said Hugh Latimer to preach within any of their churches or religious houses, till he had appeared before the Bishop and had been purged of his default.[1] This summary inhibition was duly executed on the following Sunday (October 5), in the church of St. Thomas the Apostle, of which Wilson, Latimer's old antagonist at Bristol, was incumbent; so that due justice would be given to the episcopal mandate. Latimer was now, however, beyond all fear of injury from Stokesley; he was high in royal favour, and was engaged in conjunction with Cromwell and Cranmer in unravelling the mysterious case of Elizabeth Barton, the maid of Kent.

The story of this once famous impostor may be briefly told. Originally a servant in the village of Aldington, she suffered from severe fits of epilepsy, in the paroxysms of which she uttered incoherent and unintelligible sentences, her tongue meanwhile protruding from her mouth, and her eyes almost starting from the socket. The charity of the present day would consign her at once to the care of

[1] *Chapter House Papers*, A. I. 15, 168.

the parish doctor; but in that unsophisticated age, she was looked upon with awe as one inspired by the power of the Holy Ghost. A neighbouring monk, Edward Bockyng, sagacious enough to see the use to which such a person might be applied, contrived to make her the subject of a miraculous cure, and thereby attracted crowds of pilgrims from all quarters to his Church. The maid proved herself an apt pupil, and skilfully promoted the deception; she pretended to have visions and revelations of heaven, hell and purgatory; and soon came to be recognised as a regular medium through which the will of God was made known to men. In the controversies that emerged touching the royal divorce, the Papal supremacy, and the spread of heresy, her advisers, the monks of Canterbury, eagerly availed themselves of her reputation to defend their cause by the supposed advocacy of heaven. She denounced the vengeance of God against the proposed divorce of Catherine, and against all who laboured in any way to abridge the liberties of the Church. She declared that Henry would not live a month if he married Anne; and when time had falsified her prediction, she added by way of explanation, that God had rejected him from the kingdom, although he was still, like Saul, permitted to lead a dishonoured life.

In short, the Nun was the popular mouth-piece of the Popish party, and the centre of the opposition to the policy of Cromwell as well as to the preaching of Latimer and Cranmer. She had been in communication with Wolsey and Warham: and it was her influence, it was alleged, which had arrested their zeal in Henry's cause, and induced them to thwart the promotion of the divorce. Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More had both listened with apparent respect to her revelations. She was in correspondence even with the Pope, whom she implored, as he

would avoid the imminent anger of God, to hinder the royal marriage with Anne Boleyn. The preaching friars all over England were her champions; and, as she had unquestionably exercised a formidable influence in opposing and retarding Henry's marriage, so there seemed grave reason for suspecting that under cover of reverence for this new oracle, a dangerous conspiracy was being organised against his life and crown.[1] In July, 1533, accordingly, Cranmer summoned her before him, examined her, and sent her for further examination to Cromwell. And in November, Cranmer, Latimer, and Cromwell were again employed for some time at Lambeth, unravelling the complicated conspiracies so ingeniously woven during the last four years. Her accomplices, Bockyng, Dering, and others, were also arrested, and examined. For some time they remained resolutely silent: but fear, and probably torture, at last overcame their courage, and they confessed all; and then it was no longer doubtful that a widely-ramified plot existed to dethrone Henry and elevate his daughter Mary to the throne in his stead. Many persons were implicated: even Mary and Catherine had been in communication with the Nun, though perhaps ignorant of the whole purposes of the conspirators; and when Parliament reassembled, the punishment of those concerned in this treasonable imposture was one of the chief matters that occupied their attention.

After finishing his labours in connection with the Nun of Kent, Latimer returned to spend the winter of 1533 among his parishioners. And as at the close of another year he reviewed the course by which God was leading him, he would

[1] See, on the subject of the Nun of Kent, *Chapter House Papers*, A. I. 13; Cranmer's *Letters*, No. 83, etc.; Froude, vol. ii., p. 164, etc.; *Statutes of the Realm*, 25 Henry VIII., cap. 12; Burnet's *Documents*, etc.

have abundant cause for thankfulness for the past, and hope for the future. The year had, during its course, brought upon him considerable annoyance, obloquy, and even danger. At one time it seemed as if he were about to be involved in the same troubles that had threatened him in 1532; but the dangers had been dispersed; his enemies had been disappointed of their vengeance; and the year which began in cloud, ended in hope and sunshine. The path before him seemed now bright and clear. On every side the adherents of the Reformation were increasing in numbers. It was no longer so dangerous to advocate the removal of abuses in the Church, now that the power of the clergy had been curtailed. Henry's prejudices had been rudely shaken by his long experience of the duplicity of the Papal See, and his recent detection of the treasons hatched against him by the more zealous advocates of the Papal supremacy; and surrounded as he was by advisers friendly to the Reformation, it might be hoped that he would lend the sanction of his authority to the general desire for a reform of religion. It was with happy prospects, therefore, that Latimer began the year 1534. For ten years he had known little but disappointment and fierce controversy; he now entered upon a career of wider usefulness and almost unalloyed prosperity, which terminated only when he resigned his bishopric on the passing of the Bloody Statute of 1539. It would be an additional source of gratification to him if, as has been conjectured, it was at this very period that the University bestowed on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.[1]

Cranmer had not forgotten Latimer's urgent request to be permitted to preach before the King, and clear himself of the charges so recklessly brought against him by his

[1] Kennet, in Lansdowne MSS., 979; there is no record in Cambridge.

antagonists at Bristol. And seizing a favourable opportunity, he "humbly desired and sued unto his highness," to allow Latimer to preach before him all the Wednesdays in the ensuing Lent: a request which was probably granted without much difficulty, as Latimer had already secured a good position in the royal favour. Cranmer lost no time in communicating to Latimer the result of his petition to Henry, and having some doubt that the preacher's zeal might possibly lead him into indiscreet violence, he accompanied his intimation with some sage advice, so characteristically cautious that it deserves to be quoted almost entire.

"These be to certify you of the King's pleasure, how that his Grace is contented that ye shall be admitted to preach before him on all the Wednesdays of this next Lent. Whereupon I think it very expedient, for divers considerations moving me thereto, to admonish you of certain things in no wise to be neglect or omitted on your behalf in time of your preaching. . . . . First, therefore, take this order (if ye will), reading over the book, ye take for your purpose some processes" [passages] "of Scripture, the Gospel, Epistle, or any other part of Scripture in the Bible, and the same to expound and declare according to the pure sense and meaning thereof: wherein, above all things it will be most convenient, that ye do not at all persuade for the defence of your own causes and matters lately in controversy,[1] but that ye rather do seem utterly to pass over those your accusations, than now in that place any sparkle or suspicion of grudge should appear to remain in you for the same. This done, that likewise ye be very circumspect to overpass and omit all manner speech, either apertly or suspiciously sounding against any special man's facts, acts, manners, or sayings, to the intent your audience have none occasion thereby namely to slander your adversaries; which would seem to many that you were void of charity, and so much the more unworthy to occupy that room. Nevertheless, if

[1] This expression helps to determine the date of the letter, which has sometimes been assigned to 1535. A vast variety of concurrent circumstances fixes the Bristol disturbances unquestionably to 1533; and Cranmer would hardly have used the expression *lately* after the year 1534; certainly not in 1535.

such occasion be given by the Word of God, let none offence or superstition be unreprehended, specially if it be generally spoken, without affection:

"Furthermore, I would ye should so study to comprehend your matters, that in any condition you stand no longer in the pulpit than an hour, or an hour-and-a-half at the most; for by long expense of time the King and the Queen shall peradventure wax so weary at the beginning, that they shall have small delight to continue throughout with you to the end. Therefore let the effect of the premises" [*i.e.*, the past occurrences at Bristol] "take no place in your mind, specially before this circumspect audience, to the intent that you in so doing need not to have any other declaration hereafter against the misreports of your adversaries. And for your further instruction in this behalf, I would ye should the sooner come up to London, here to prepare all things in a readiness, according to such expectation as is had in you." [1]

Cranmer wrote at the same time to the Dean of the Chapel Royal, informing him that with the King's consent he had appointed "Master Latymer, a man of singular learning, virtuous example of living, and sincere preaching the Word of God," to officiate before the Court on the Wednesdays in the ensuing Lent; and requesting him to make arrangement accordingly, and to cancel any previous appointment. Sampson, the Dean of the Chapel Royal, was by no means elated at the prospect of having Latimer as preacher on all the Wednesdays in Lent: he had been a member of the Convocation which condemned Latimer, and it was anything but a pleasure to him to nominate as Court preacher the very man whom he had denounced as a heretic, and whom he would gladly have silenced altogether. He sent a reply to Cranmer immediately, as he had been desired to do, in which he expresses his willingness to comply with the King's orders,

[1] From a volume containing copies of many of Cranmer's letters, Harleian MSS., 6148. This letter was written, I conjecture, at Otford, in the first week of January, 1534.

without concealing his own total disapprobation of the Archbishop's proposal.

"There is one appointed for the Wednesdays in Lent," he writes, "notwithstanding, if it be the King's pleasure that Latimer shall supply the same, I shall be obedient to his pleasure. And to say liberally to your Grace of that man, by my troth, I favour him in my mind for his learning; I pray God it may be moderate (the times are not most pleasant), since that his teaching moveth no little dissension among the people wheresoever he cometh, the which is either a token of new doctrine, or else negligence in not expressing of his mind more clearly to the people. . . . . It is not unknown to your Grace that he was much suspect for his preaching before all the Convocation, of the which (though it be one of the least) I was and am a poor member. Wherefore your Grace shall be author of this matter, and I no minister, except the King shall so command me."[1]

In short, the unhappy Dean consented with the worst possible grace, only under a species of compulsion, and as it were protesting that he was not to be held responsible for any unfortunate consequences that might result from so rash a selection of a preacher.

In January, 1534, therefore, Latimer proceeded to London, on a very different errand, and with widely different prospects, from those of his previous winter journey to the metropolis, only two years before. Lent began on February 18, and from that day till April 1 he would preach once a week before the Court. No notice has been preserved of the subjects of these sermons: but the themes were doubtless selected after consultation with Cranmer and Cromwell, and would be such as the times seemed most urgently to require. Whether he profited by Cranmer's advice, and was as cautious and concise in the pulpit

[1] From the State Paper Office. I have quoted the letter at some length, as it has never been printed. It bears date January 10, and thus confirms Dr. Jenkins's conjecture, that Cranmer's Letter (Harl. MSS. 6148), to which it is a reply, has been erroneously in the copy dated *July* 9, instead of *January* 9.

as that amiable prelate had recommended, may perhaps be doubted; for such discreet reticence was uncongenial to Latimer's impulsive temperament: but no angry controversy followed his preaching, so that his words, however bold and uncompromising, must have seemed to his audience no bolder than the occasion required.

For in truth the great crisis was come. The revelations of the treason prepared against the King by the dissatisfied partisans of Catherine and the Pope, compelled Henry, in self-defence, to adopt a more resolute policy than he had at first contemplated; and the legislation of Parliament was as prompt and decisive as the boldest Reformer could have wished. All appeals to Rome, of whatever nature, were rigorously prohibited.[1] No bulls for consecration were to be any longer procured from the *Bishop of Rome, otherwise called the Pope;* nor were any persons to be presented, nominated, or commended to him for any bishopric within the realm. All payments to Rome, pensions, Peter-pence, procurations, etc., were to cease. All the power and jurisdiction hitherto claimed by the Pope were transferred to the King. He was constituted visitor of all the religious houses, and empowered to inspect and reform them. Bishops were to be elected by the Dean and Chapter on a Royal recommendation; and anyone refusing or delaying to elect and to consecrate in accordance with the Sovereign's orders, was liable to the penalty of a *præmunire*. In short, all traces of Papal supremacy in the Church, as in the State, were formally abolished: and the long usurpation of many centuries was at last overthrown. The clergy were helpless to oppose these sweeping changes. The people had ceased to dread their spiritual censures; and all classes of society had suffered too

[1] *Statutes of the Realm*, 25 Henry VIII., cap. 19, 20, 21, etc.

much from them in the arrogance of their prosperity, to feel sympathy for them in their humiliation. The power and spirit of the clergy were completely broken; they lacked the courage to make any steady united opposition to Henry's proposals; and, stifling their rage and indignation as they best could, they had to assume the appearance of submission and acquiescence. For the dignified clergy who sat in Convocation, a more bitter degradation was in store. Like the disgraced ministers of an Oriental despot, they were compelled to commit official suicide, and by their own acts to terminate their authority. The all-important question, "whether the Bishop of Rome had, *by Scripture*, any more jurisdiction within the realm of England than any other foreign bishop," a question which went to the root of all the Papal pretensions, was submitted to Convocation, and was decided by an immense majority against the Papal claims; in the Lower House four members only were bold enough to vote in favour of the Pope's proud pretensions.[1]

It was not from any zeal for the adoption of the doctrines of the Reformers, that Parliament and Convocation agreed in abolishing all traces of the Papal supremacy in England. On the contrary, they had simply thrown off a yoke of spiritual ignorance and tyranny, which was no longer compatible with the growing light and freedom of the age; and at the time, Parliament, far from contemplating further progress in the direction of a reformation of religion, solemnly protested that their proceedings were not to be interpreted "as if the King and his subjects intended to decline, or vary from the congregation of Christ's Church, in any things concerning the very articles of the Catholic faith of Christendom."[2] Parliament, in fact, had assumed

[1] Wilkins' *Concilia*, iii., 760.
[2] *Statutes of the Realm*, 25 Henry VIII.

that it was possible to occupy the untenable position of being "Popish, without acknowledging the Pope," of adhering to all the dogmas which had been introduced under the sanction of the Papal See, while disowning its authority; a vain delusion, which cost England much blood, and which even yet ever and again reappears to the perplexity of the English Church. Even at the outset, however, Parliament considerably relaxed the cruel laws which had countenanced the persecution of the Reformers. To speak against the Bishop of Rome and his pretended authority, or to condemn his spiritual laws, was no longer to be reputed heresy. This was one immense step in advance. Persons accused of heresy were in future to be proceeded against only on the presentment of at least two lawful witnesses. They were to be tried in open court, not in secret ecclesiastical conclave. They might be bailed. If found guilty, and refusing to abjure, they were not to be burnt without a royal writ.[1] Persecution was henceforth to be at all events a public open transaction, in lawful courts, and by legal processes. The arbitrary violence of the Ecclesiastical Courts was abolished; and many who had long lain in prison, detained on mere suspicion of heresy, in contravention of the fundamental privileges of English subjects, were now set free. The Nun of Kent, and five monks her accomplices, were convicted of high treason, and executed at Tyburn; and all the books of her pretended revelations were to be delivered up under severe penalties. Fisher and More, who had been in correspondence with the impostor, and incurred their Sovereign's displeasure, were arraigned by Parliament, but in the mean time were pardoned on submission and

[1] *Statutes of the Realm*, 25 Henry VIII.

apology. One important subject still remained to be settled, the succession to the throne: and an Act was passed limiting the succession to Henry's children by Anne, "his lawful wife;" and declaring that his former marriage was null and void, prohibited in the law of God, and beyond any power of Papal dispensation. To do or say anything to the slander of Henry's marriage with Anne was constituted treason; and all subjects were required to take a solemn oath to observe the succession as thus settled by Parliament. It was on March 23, that this important statute was passed;[1] and on the same day, by a singular coincidence, Clement VII., after seven years' hesitation and diplomatic intrigue, at last pronounced *his* final sentence in the matter of the divorce, solemnly declaring the marriage with Catherine to be valid, and ordering Henry, under the highest ecclesiastical censure, to receive her again as his wife; weak words now, which a few years before would have struck terror into the boldest heart.

It is scarcely possible to overestimate the effect of such decisive and momentous legislation. The Church of England was entirely set free from its ancient allegiance to the Papal See. At last the law was supreme in England, over all persons, clerical and lay. The tables were completely turned upon the clergy; they had long known no master save a foreign ecclesiastical potentate, they had scarcely recognised their amenability to the law, they had persecuted and imprisoned with impunity; now they felt the strong hand of the King and the Parliament upon them, and they were required to make their choice between perjury and treason, between renouncing that belief in Papal supremacy and infallibility which they had long cherished as the corner-stone of their faith, and defying the law, and

[1] *Statutes of the Realm*, 25 Henry VIII. cap. 22.

exposing themselves to its penalties. It was not yet a Reformation, for Parliament had not formally adopted any of the doctrinal tenets of the Reformers; but it was a Revolution; and without a revolution no such reformation as the gravity of the times required was possible.

It was impossible that such measures could be passed without provoking a strong feeling of opposition in various parts of the country. The clergy had, indeed, been cowed by Henry's vigour and determination; but there were many amongst them willing to face death rather than perjure their consciences, and there were many more who, submitting to what seemed inevitable at the time, watched their opportunity for regaining the authority of which they were thus deprived by violence. Treasonable words were whispered in the confessional; and, over the length and breadth of England, the various religious orders were, as boldly as they dared, expressing their dissatisfaction with the recent legislation. Henry was not ignorant of this smouldering discontent; but he had been forced into the line of policy which he adopted; and his safety as well as his dignity required that he should pursue it without hesitation, whatever opposition might be encountered. It was an anxious time also for Cromwell; for he, more than any other, was responsible for the measures of the King. Cranmer did not exaggerate when he declared that "Cromwell had done more than all others together in whatever was effected respecting the Reformation of religion and the clergy."[1] Cromwell alone had any distinct aim; he alone was pursuing a specific end; and hitherto he had found no one able to co-operate with him, no one of real power and influence in the country who could be relied on to promote

[1] *Original Letters*, p. 15. Parker Society.

his views. At last, however, he seemed to have found in Latimer the friend of whom he had been so long in search. The two had been much thrown together for some time, and had learned to appreciate each other's merits. Latimer was clearly a man of real power and ability, whose zeal and eloquence could sway the mind of the nation, and whose services would be of essential benefit in supporting the policy on which the King and his minister had embarked. From this period, accordingly, dates the commencement of an intimate friendship between Latimer and Cromwell, which was of great importance to both, and which was doubtless one of the chief causes that led to Latimer's promotion. Not that Latimer had begun to court promotion; he was too honest to be the mere tool of any minister; he had too little ambition, and was too outspoken to be a mere political supporter; he assisted Cromwell most effectually when he was at the same time most zealously asserting his own convictions; he promoted the policy of the great statesman most powerfully when he was devoting all his eloquence to the denunciation of those gross abuses in the Church which he had so long laboured to remove.

Against any possible opposition to these measures, Henry and Cromwell adopted every precaution. They had no intention to permit any open discussion of their policy, or to tolerate any adverse criticisms upon it. The clergy might be expected as a body to be hostile, and their sermons might dangerously inflame the minds of the discontented; therefore, to silence them, an inhibition was issued recalling all licences to preach, until those who held them appeared before their Bishops, and were cautioned not to "speak of such matters as touched the prince, his laws or succession." Preachers likely to be troublesome, would, of course, not

have their licences renewed; and thus one fertile source of opposition was stopped. In June, a more peremptory proclamation appeared, commanding all Bishops and clergy to preach every Sunday, "that the style, title, and jurisdiction of supreme head (so long usurped by the Pope) appertaineth only to our crown and dignity royal;" and ordering that all prayers, rubrics, and service-books, "wherein the said Bishop of Rome is named, or his presumption and proud pomp and authority preferred, should be utterly abolished and razed out, and his name and memory should be never more (except to his contumely and reproach) remembered." And lest this duty should be evaded, all loyal subjects were required to observe whether the clergy complied with the proclamation, "without any manner of sinister addition, wrong interpretation, or painted colour."[1] Similar instructions were directed to the justices of the peace and the county magistrates,[2] and the whole kingdom was placed on its guard, like a wakeful garrison, or an army in the presence of the foe. For, in spite of his past success, Henry knew that he had entered a perilous course; and he was resolved to omit no precaution that prudence could dictate in order to prevent resistance, or to restrict it within narrow limits.

It had been ordered by Parliament that all members should take the oath to the succession as it had been determined by the legislature. Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher declined to take this oath. They were willing indeed to swear to the succession, but they objected to certain expressions in the preamble, or declined to commit themselves to all that was asserted in the Act. The example of two men so notably conspicuous for their great

[1] Foxe, vol. v. p. 69.
[2] Burnet, vi. p. 106.

ability and high position, could not be overlooked. Cranmer, with his usual gentleness, entreated that they might be allowed to take the oath in any modified form to which they could consent;[1] but this would have been to stultify the whole recent legislation of Parliament. Efforts were made to induce them to swear; but as they remained firm, Henry had no alternative but to order them to be imprisoned.

The proceedings against More fortunately furnish us with an interesting glimpse of Latimer at this important period, all the more interesting as so few records of his proceedings at this time have been preserved. More had been summoned before the Commissioners at Lambeth on April 13, and Cranmer had in vain employed all the artifices of his kindly logic to induce him to take the oath of succession. While the Commissioners were deliberating on the matter, More was asked to go down into the garden of the palace. "And thereupon," writes he to his daughter Roper,[2] "I tarried in the old burned chamber that looketh into the garden, and would not go down because of the heat. In that time saw I Master Doctor Latimer come into the garden; and there walked he with divers other doctors and chaplains of my lord of Canterbury. And very merry I saw him; for he laughed, and took one or twain about the neck so handsomely that if they had been women, I would have weened he had been waxen wanton." Sir Thomas loved a joke, and was a lively correspondent, and we may therefore fairly make some deduction from this playfully exaggerated picture of exuberant gaiety;

[1] Cranmer's *Letters*, No. 105.

[2] Sir Thomas More's *Works*. London, 1557, p. 1429. One can understand Sir Thomas More's exaggerated satire: but what shall we say of Sir Henry Ellis's remark, that this "is a picture of the ordinary extravagance of Latimer's manner"? [*Letters, third series*, vol. iii. p. 202].

but the glimpse thus preserved in his pages accords with all that we know of Latimer's warm and affectionate nature; and the legislation of that spring, and the general prospects of religion, in England, might well cheer the spirits of one who had long laboured in danger and darkness. It was but two years since all was hostile, and he had meditated flight from a country where neither his life nor his liberty seemed secure; now, in a wonderful manner, beyond all his hopes, that gigantic power which had overshadowed England was overthrown, and a bright day of freedom and truth and light seemed to have dawned: and therefore, Latimer, well-nigh exhausted by controversy and despair, might be excused if his joy in its happy exuberance spurned all conventional restraints.

Soon after the incident in the gardens of Lambeth Palace, Latimer returned, buoyant with good news, to his country cure; where his parishioners must have already begun to suspect that he was not likely long to remain a mere country-parson. Cranmer, indeed, had invested him with a species of delegated episcopal authority. He had not only granted Latimer afresh his licence for preaching everywhere within his province, but he had committed to him the charge of administering the injunctions to all those preachers who were to be licensed, with the caution that he should be "right circumspect that the injunctions be well observed," or else that he should return to the Archbishop the licences of those of whose conduct he had any doubt.[1] Practically, therefore, Latimer was entrusted with the care of supplying spiritual teachers for the West of England: it was at "his request and instance," that licences to preach were granted by Cranmer; and in the peculiar cir-

[1] Cranmer's *Letters*, No. 127.

cumstances of the great Western counties, he was almost invested with the power of a bishop.

The two great Western dioceses of Worcester and Salisbury were then in a very anomalous position. They had been declared vacant by Parliament this very year of 1534.[1] The Bishops, Campeggio and Ghinucci, were both Italians; they resided at Rome; one of them had never been in England at all; the other, Campeggio, had certainly never been in his diocese; neither of them had ever performed any episcopal functions beyond receiving the enormous revenues of their sees. Their absence, as Parliament regretted, was "to the manifest injury of hospitality, Divine service, teaching, preaching, and example of good living;" nor was it an insignificant provocation, that at least three thousand pounds were annually conveyed out of England as the net proceeds of their dioceses, to be spent in luxury at Rome. On these grounds Parliament had deprived them of their bishoprics, allowing them, however, four months of grace, within which they might return, and retain their dioceses, upon taking the oaths to obey the laws of the land. At the period, therefore, of which we are now speaking—the summer of 1534—there was actually no bishop in the see of Worcester. And no diocese more urgently required the watchful care of a zealous bishop: it was the most neglected see in England. For forty years it had been governed by a succession of Italian prelates, not one of whom had ever resided in his bishopric. For many years, Wolsey, also non-resident, had nominally administered its affairs; and since his death, it had been presided over by Thomas Parker, the Chancellor of the diocese, the same furious bigot, whom

[1] *Statutes of the Realm*, 25 Henry VIII. 27.

we have already seen exhuming and burning the body of William Tracy. Everything, therefore, was in that state of total disorganisation which might be expected in a large and populous see, which for half a century had not known the active superintendence of a resident prelate. Probably the diocese had been already designed for Latimer, as soon as the necessary arrangements could be completed for removing Ghinucci; and his occupation this summer formed an admirable introduction to the future labours of his episcopate, by bringing him into contact with many of the clergy over whom he was subsequently to preside.

While England was thus in every pulpit proclaiming that the Papal supremacy was at an end, and arming herself against any attempt from within or without to bring her again under the yoke, the unhappy Pope, whose vacillation had excited all this fierce strife, passed away. And pious watchers of events, who believed that all occurrences were governed not by chance, but by the will of God, recognised the Divine wisdom and goodness in the period of the Pope's death. Had Clement died two years sooner, before Henry and the Parliament had irrevocably committed themselves to their new course, the whole history of England might have assumed a different complexion. A new pontiff might have granted the King's suit; Henry would have remained the anointed "Defender of the Faith," the elect champion of orthodoxy; and his strong hand might have crushed the English Reformation in the bud. Even after all the legislation of the last two sessions, Henry was still willing to listen to overtures of reconciliation with Rome. It was no easy matter to eradicate from his mind the beliefs and habits of his whole past life. There was an able Popish party still in the country, powerful among the bishops, the nobles, and the Northern coun-

ties; and though the superior ability and determination of Cromwell for a time kept Henry steady in that policy which he had begun, yet Gardiner and Norfolk were sleepless enemies, ever on the alert to avail themselves of any false step on the part of the great statesman. It was an inestimable advantage, therefore, to the cause of the Reformation, that Clement survived until some decisive steps had been taken, which did not admit of recall.

Parliament re-assembled in November, an unusual proceeding in those times, betokening the gravity of the crisis through which the nation was passing. Their legislation was conceived in the same spirit that had animated previous sessions. Their first act (26 Henry VIII. cap. 1), the famous *Act of Supremacy*, once again formally declared, with admirable precision and brevity, what had been formerly admitted, that the King was "the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England, and that he had full power and authority to visit, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, contempts, and enormities, which, by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction, ought, or may lawfully, be reformed, repressed, ordered, or amended." To deprive the King of any of his dignity, or titles of his royal estate, or to call him heretic, schismatic, or infidel, was to be reckoned high treason (26 Henry VIII. cap. 13). All persons were required to take the oath to the Act of Succession, and More and Fisher, who had refused to swear to it without qualifications, were attainted of treason; the former being, in addition, charged with sundry acts of ingratitude to Henry, which aggravated his offence (26 Henry VIII. 22, 23). And to demonstrate that the Royal Supremacy over the Church was no mere legal figment, Commissioners were appointed to visit and in-

quire into the value and condition of every benefice in England (26 Henry VIII. cap. 3). At the close of the year, on the earnest solicitation of Convocation, Henry issued another prohibition of suspected books. In the main, this was a reactionary document, a feeble attempt on the part of the clergy to clog the wheels of Parliamentary legislation, although it contains several concessions to the spirit of the times, due probably to the influence of Cranmer. It prohibited all "books of Divine Scripture in the English tongue, with any annotations in the margin, or any prologue, or additions in the kalendar or table, except such annotations be first viewed, examined, and allowed by the King's highness, but only the plain sentence and text." It condemned "the setting forth of lewd opinions on the most blessed sacrament of the altar;" it enjoined the "observance of all ceremonies not abolished, as processions, creeping to the cross on Good Friday, etc., and it summarily prohibited the marriage of priests." [1] The great object of Convocation in this prohibition seems to have been to condemn once more the translation of Tyndale. That distinguished Reformer, almost sublime in the inflexible earnestness with which, in poverty and exile, he devoted himself to the one great purpose of his life, the glorious determination to bring the English Scriptures within the reach of the poorest of his countrymen, had just finished his career of active labour. Pursued with relentless diligence by the emissaries of Henry, he had recently been betrayed at Antwerp, and was languishing in prison. A few months later he perished in the flames at Vilvorde, without even setting foot again in that ungrateful country for which he had so unceasingly laboured; a country which has never yet fairly recognised the immense debt of grati-

[1] Wilkins' *Concilia*, iii. p. 776.

tude it owes to that simple-minded and undaunted Reformer, to whom England owes her greatest treasure—the noble English Bible.

In 1535 neither Parliament nor Convocation assembled. It was a year of stern action; too busy for debating and parliamentary eloquence. All over England the old ecclesiastical power and pretension was engaged in deadly duel with the new Royal authority. Henry was not the man to sleep over his new-established prerogative, especially when any symptoms of irresolution might have cost him so dear. He had taken his stand, and had marked out the path in which his subjects were to tread, and no deviation was to be allowed, either to the right hand or to the left. No man, at the peril of his life, might remain neutral in this fierce struggle; all must choose their side, and woe to him whose conscience would not allow him to go so far as the King had done, or compelled him to go farther. To deny the Royal Supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, or to decline the Oath of Succession, with its oblique censure of the Pope, was high treason, for which a man might be hanged and quartered. To deny the corporeal presence of Christ in the sacrament, or to call in question the traditional teaching of the Church on the most mysterious subjects, was heresy, for which a man might die at the stake. It was truly a time of peril, especially dangerous to the more thorough-going adherents of either side. Men of moderate opinions might escape, but the conscientious defenders of the Papal claims, and the bold advocates of a complete reformation in doctrine and ritual, were almost certain to suffer from the dangers that threatened on either hand.

The contest was not conducted without bloodshed; both parties furnished their martyrs to Henry's rigorous impartiality, and on both sides men met their death with a

courage that did them honour. On May 4, 1535, five ecclesiastics were executed for treason. On the 25th of the same month, fourteen Dutch Anabaptists were burned in Smithfield for heresy. On June 19, three monks of the Charter House were hanged as traitors; and, to strike terror into the rest of the clergy, they were executed in their priestly vestments. Two more notable victims followed, whose death resounded all over Europe. Fisher, whose great learning and high character made him for years the leader of that ecclesiastical party in England which favoured the Pope's pretensions, had been imprisoned for some time for his share in the imposture of the Nun of Kent, and had been deprived of his bishopric. He was now arraigned on the charge of "falsely and maliciously maintaining that the King, our sovereign lord, is not supreme head in earth of the Church of England;"[1] an offence which, by the late Acts of Parliament, amounted to high treason; and he was condemned and beheaded on June 22. He died calmly and bravely. His head, for which the Pope had indiscreetly sent a cardinal's hat, was in barbarous mockery exhibited on London Bridge. A fortnight after, Sir Thomas More followed him to the block—condemned and executed for the same offence. It is unnecessary to repeat the familiar narrative of his execution, or to write the panegyric of the great philosophic Chancellor, who died so strangely, with a jest upon his lips. He was recognised as the greatest representative of English wit and learning; a "man of incomparable genius," as Erasmus styles him; and the many admirable features in his character, his simplicity, his urbanity, his integrity, the fascinating

[1] The questions administered to Fisher and More in the Tower, with their answers, are preserved, in a very dilapidated condition, in the *Chapter House Papers*, A. I. 13.

grace of his domestic life, have won for him the universal esteem of all men of letters. His praises may be read in every history of England; but in this biography of Latimer it must not be omitted that Sir Thomas More, the Chancellor of England, and guardian of her laws, sanctioned the imprisonment, torture, and death of English subjects contrary to the law; that having in his youth advocated toleration and charity with all the charms of his eloquence, he, in his riper years, defiled his pen with feeble and intolerant abuse of a man at least as honest and noble as himself—William Tyndale; that he consigned Bilney to the flames with a heartless joke, and listened to slanders upon his reputation after his death, on the doubtful evidence of a peculating priest; that having maintained in his *Utopia* that no man ought to be punished for his religious belief, he caused it to be inscribed on his tombstone that he was "*furibus et homicidis, hæreticisque molestus.*" [1]

In putting to death Fisher and More, Henry gave indubitable evidence of his fixed determination to spare no one who opposed his policy. It was a challenge to his opponents; and the Pope lost no time in replying to the open defiance of this rebellious son of the Church. On August 30, he fulminated a bull against Henry, depriving him of his dominions, absolving his subjects from their allegiance, placing the kingdom under an interdict, and urging all orthodox sovereigns to unite in a crusade against him. The

[1] It is well known that in the epitaph composed by himself, and engraven on the tomb-stone in the old parish church of Chelsea, the word *hæreticisque* does not occur, but a blank space is left between *homicidis* and *molestus*. The word, however, stood in the copy of the epitaph transmitted by More to Erasmus; and Sir Thomas even boasts of it in one of his letters: "Quod in Epitaphio profiteor *hæreticis* me fuisse *molestum*, hoc ambitiose feci: nam omnino sic *illud hominum genus odi* ut illis ni resipiscant tam invisus esse velim quam cui maxime." Letter to Erasmus: Erasmus' *Letters* B. 27: Letter 10.

supremacy was no verbal distinction, but a real power worth the struggling for; and if the Pope was unwilling to relinquish what had long belonged to the Papal see, Henry was on his part equally resolved not to abandon what seemed to him the brightest jewel of his crown. He knew well from what quarter in England resistance might be expected—from the army of regular clergy, quartered like Papal garrisons in the numerous monastic establishments that existed in every county. Already they had rendered themselves conspicuous for the uncompromising boldness with which they opposed his divorce, and his marriage with Anne; and it was quite certain that all their influence would be exerted to maintain the Papal supremacy, and to thwart the recent legislation of Parliament. With this difficulty also Henry was prepared to cope; he had been armed with plenary authority to visit all religious houses, and to correct and reform them as he saw necessary; and this power, as we shall presently see, enabled him to impose a most effectual check on the insubordinate tendencies of the religious orders.

Of Latimer's occupation since last we saw him in London in Lambeth Garden, nothing certain is known. The responsible charge committed to him by Cranmer would sufficiently employ his energies, and would keep him on the alert. As he was now free to preach in any part of the South of England, and as preachers who could be trusted to proclaim the "true, mere, and sincere Word of God," and to denounce "the proud pomp and presumption of the Bishop of Rome," were by no means abundant, it is probable that Latimer may have spent much of his time in officiating in various places adjacent to his little country parish. It is also likely that he spent some part of the spring of 1535 in London; for Latimer's eloquence

rendered him a great power in England, and in the face of the determined opposition which the recent Acts of Parliament were likely to excite, it was no small gain to Cromwell to secure the advocacy of one whose words produced so profound a sensation among the people. The following notice of Latimer seems to belong most appropriately to the present year:—

"I heard a sermon yesterday of Master Latimer," so runs the confession of John Stanton, "saying that no man of himself hath authority to forgive sins; and that the Pope hath no more authority than another Bishop." "Latimer," the father confessor replied to the penitent, "is a false knave, a heretic. Marry, this I heard Latimer say, that if a man come to confession, and be not sorry for his sins, the priest hath no power to forgive him. I say the Pope's pardon is as good as ever it was, and he is the head of the universal Church, and so will I take him. Here in England the King and his Parliament hath put him out; but be of good comfort, and stedfast in your faith: *this thing will not last long, I warrant you.*"[1]

Such was the teaching of many a confessional, fomenting a spirit of disobedience and rebellion, living in hope of a speedy deliverance from the yoke of Henry and the Parliament.

There is no doubt that Latimer spent part of the summer of 1535 in London, in consultation with Cranmer and Cromwell on the situation of affairs in the Church and State. Cranmer, who almost alone of the dignified clergy was in favour of the Reformation, was anxious that Latimer should be promoted to one of the vacant bishoprics, that he might have at least one friend on the bench whose energy would be honestly devoted to the great cause that he had at heart. And Cromwell, without friends or counsellors in the midst of all his power, was equally anxious to avail himself of Latimer's shrewd and honest advice.

[1] Froude's *History of England*, vol. ii.

To this friendship of Cromwell we are indebted for a considerable amount of correspondence, extending over the whole of Latimer's episcopate, and of great value as illustrating his labours during that important period of his life. The first of these letters belongs clearly to the summer of 1535, and was apparently written in London :—

"*To the right honourable Master Secretary to the King's Grace:*

"Right honourable Sir, *Salutem in Christo Jesu.* And as to the thing that I moved unto your mastership[1] at my departure yesterday, this bearer is the gentleman of whom I told you of, ready to all things that you shall require of him, and only for lack of calling on hitherto slow; as he himself can tell you. And perchance he can tell you of more as far behind hand as he, if commissioners were always as mindful to further the King's business as they be to advance their own profits about their tenants, etc. But I ween if you might make progress throughout England, you should find how 'acts declareth hearts.' But you can use all things to the best, according to your approved wisdom. And meseemeth it were not amiss that gentlemen of lands and arms should so swear to the King's issue, that their oaths and also names be registered, etc.; for so you should know surely who were sworn and who not. I pray you be good master to this gentleman my prisoner" [parishioner?], "and pardon me of this my foolish scribbling.

"Yours, to his little power,

"H. Latimer.

"It may chance that I shall send you more to the same purpose. God preserve you in long life to God's pleasure."[2]

The oath here referred to, is the Oath of the Succession, appointed by Parliament in the close of 1534 to be admin-

[1] Cromwell was then Master of the Rolls.

[2] From the State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers*, C. 3. 21. The volume contains thirty-five letters from Latimer, arranged without much regard to chronological order. These have all been printed in Dr. Corrie's edition of Latimer's *Remains*, in general with wonderful accuracy, considering the extreme difficulty of deciphering the wretched writing. Few other of Latimer's letters have been preserved; most of them, in all probability, having been burnt as utterly beyond the reach of human ingenuity to decipher.

istered to all English subjects; and it is plain from the terms of the letter that Latimer had been consulted by Cromwell on this leading political measure of the day.

Latimer's chief business in London at this period, however, was, undoubtedly, in connection with his proposed elevation to the vacant see of Worcester. Cranmer and Cromwell, we know, would warmly support his appointment; Henry had oftener than once expressed his approbation of Latimer; and he was an especial favourite with Anne Boleyn, who still remained supreme in the King's affections.[1] The circumstances of the times, moreover, and the gravity of the situation, required that preachers of ability should be promoted to the responsible position of bishops, men who would exercise all their influence in advancing the policy of the King and his great minister. Latimer and Shaxton, therefore, who had been for several years conspicuous for their zeal in defending Henry's cause, were destined for the vacant sees of Worcester and Salisbury: and it was in connection with this business, a complicated and tedious one from various causes, that Latimer was detained in London till the commencement of November.

If Latimer was ambitious, he had at last, in his fiftieth year, achieved a brilliant triumph; if he was desirous of a position where full scope would be given for the exercise of those abilities of which he was conscious, he had at length succeeded in reaching it; if he pined after ease and comfort and honour after the fierce turmoil and danger of his past life, surely he must have been sagacious enough to perceive that his new dignity was more likely to bring

[1] There does not appear, however, to be any certain evidence that he was, as is usually stated, Anne's chaplain: *William* Latimer, was one of her chaplains (Rymer, vol. xiv.); hence perhaps the confusion.

a vast accession to his load of cares than to minister to any love of rest.

It does not appear that he at any time solicited the high office to which he was now advanced; indeed, even his enemies have seldom charged him with the infirmity of ambition. It would be with a weighty sense of responsibility that he would undertake the solemn duties of his new rank; and yet, in the heart of one who had so long contended in a seemingly hopeless battle against overwhelming odds, there must have risen up emotions of gratitude and hope, as he now prepared to continue the combat on more advantageous terms, and with brightening prospects of success.

CHAPTER V.

Latimer's Episcopate. Sept. 1535, to July, 1539.

Latimer enjoyed his new dignity barely four years; but these were among the most momentous years in the history of the English Church and nation. During his brief episcopate occurred the trial and execution of Anne Boleyn, the suppression of the monasteries, the authorised circulation of the Scriptures in English, the issue of the First Articles of the Reformed Church of England, the Pilgrimage of Grace, the Romish re-action, and the enactment of the "Bloody Statutes." In most of these transactions, Latimer was deeply interested; in many of them he had an important share: and when to these public cares were added the daily administration of a large, populous, and long-neglected diocese, the arduous task of providing for the spiritual instruction of his charge when qualified instructors were very few, and the perilous duty of guiding his clergy aright in times of unusual difficulty and danger, it will be understood that these few years of his episcopate were among the busiest and most harassing of his life. Of the daily round of his episcopal cares we have only a few records remaining: the anxieties of a reforming bishop, in a Popish diocese, while the country was passing through the crisis of a Reformation and the throes of civil war, must be left to the reader's imagination,

materially assisted, however, by Latimer's frequent letters to Cromwell. No one who has carefully marked Latimer's previous career can doubt that he would conduct himself like a "diligent and vigilant pastor, instructing his diocese with wholesome doctrine, and example of perfect conversation duly agreeing to the same," exhibiting such "study, readiness, and continual carefulness in teaching, preaching, exhorting, visiting, correcting and reforming, either as his ability could serve, or else the time would bear."[1] The times, indeed, were dangerous, and required wary walking; and Latimer's zeal for reformation was grievously impeded, not only by the ignorance and superstition of the people, but by the reluctance of the King to permit any wide departure from the doctrine and ritual to which he was so firmly attached. But the nature of the cares and opposition by which he was "tossed and turmoiled," and finally driven from his see, will appear more clearly as we proceed.

The diocese of Worcester was much more extensive in Latimer's time than at present. It included not only the present diocese, but also what is now the united diocese of Gloucester and Bristol; so that it was of sufficient dimensions to give full occupation to the time and energy of the most active prelate. Its revenues were princely, ample enough to satisfy any vulgar ambition that merely longed for money. After all deductions were made, Latimer had a net income of upwards of £1,000 a year,[2] equivalent to at least £15,000 of our money. Various manors in the county of Worcester belonged to the Bishop; he had a convenient London residence;[3] and he possessed in addition

[1] Foxe, vol. vii., p. 461.

[2] The exact sum, according to Tanner, was £1,049 17s. 3d.

[3] Stroud Place, levelled to make room for Somerset's Palace. See Dugdale's *Monasticon*.

the stately castle of Hartlebury, which, for upwards of nine centuries, had been the palace of the Bishops of Worcester.

Latimer's election was conducted in exact conformity with the method prescribed by Parliament after the abolishing of the Papal Supremacy; and as several fierce though minute controversies have been waged in connection with this subject, it may not be amiss to notice in detail the whole process. Immediately on a see being declared vacant, a writ was issued to seize the temporalities into the King's hand: a *congé d'élire* was then granted, and the person nominated therein was in due course elected to the bishopric, and his election was certified to the King. A commission under the Great Seal was next addressed to the Archbishop to examine the election, and, if it were rightly made, to confirm it, and to consecrate the new Bishop. A certificate of the consecration was then forwarded to the King; the new Bishop took the Oath of Allegiance; and finally a writ was issued from the Exchequer to restore the temporalities.[1]

That this course was followed with due regularity in Latimer's case, is apparent from the following "Deed for restoring the temporalities of the see of Worcester.—[2]

"Rex Escætori suo in comitatu Wigorniæ, salutem:

"Cum reverendissimus in Christo pater Thomas, Cantuarensis Archi-episcopus, totius Angliæ Primas et Metropolitanus, vacante nuper episcopatu Wygorniensi, per deprivationem Jeronimi de Ghinuccis ultimi episcopi ibidem, Prior Ecclesiæ Cathedralis Wygorniensis, et ejusdem loci commonachi sive conventus, dilectum et fidelem capellanum nostrum Magistrum Hugonem Latymer sacræ Theologiæ professorem, in eorum episcopum elegerint et nominaverint, cui quidem electioni et personæ sic electæ regium nostrum

[1] See the whole more minutely explained in Archbishop Bramhall's *Works*, vol. iii.

[2] Rymer, *Fœdera*, xiv. 553.

assensum adhibuimus et favorem, confirmaverit, ac ipsum Hugonem Latymer episcopum Wygorniensem consecraverit, ipsumque episcopalibus insignibus investiverit, sicuti per literas patentes ipsius reverendissimi in Christo patris nobis inde directas constat, Nos, confirmationem et consecrationem illas acceptantes, fidelitatem ipsius electi et confirmati nobis pro temporalibus episcopatus prædicti debitam cepimus, et temporalia prædicti prout moris est restituimus eidem : et ideo tibi præcipimus quod eidem electo temporalia prædicta sine dilatione liberes:

"Teste rege apud Westmonasterium, quarto die Octobris. Anno 1535."

In English, somewhat as follows :—

"The King to his Officer of the Exchequer, in the county of Worcester, greeting :

"Whereas the most reverend father in Christ, Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England, and Metropolitan (the see of Worcester being lately vacant by the deprivation of Jerome de Ghinucci the last Bishop, and the Prior[1] and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of Worcester having elected and nominated for their Bishop our trusty and well-beloved chaplain Hugh Latimer, Doctor of Divinity, to which election, and person thus elected, we have given our royal assent and favour), has confirmed and consecrated Hugh Latimer Bishop of Worcester, and invested him with the episcopal *insignia*" [ring, pastoral staff, etc.] "as appears from letters patent of the most reverend father in Christ addressed to us on this matter, We, accepting this confirmation and consecration, have received the oath of the Bishop-elect due to us for the temporalities of the said bishopric, and restore to him the temporalities as is usual; and therefore we order thee to deliver the temporalities to the said Bishop-elect without delay.

"Given by the King at Westminster, Oct. 4, 1535."

This authentic document, preserved in the public records of the country, ought long ago to have settled several controversies which are still occasionally agitated. It places beyond dispute, for example, the fact that Latimer received

[1] There was as yet no Dean at Worcester.

the degree of Doctor of Divinity; although, as has been already mentioned, there is no record in Cambridge of his thus graduating, and at his last examination at Oxford "the carpet or cloth which lay upon the table whereat Master Ridley stood, was removed, because (as men reported), Master Latimer had never the degree of a Doctor, as Master Ridley had."[1] It is the merest pedantry to call in question a fact, which rests on a record as authoritative as *Magna Charta*, merely because it happens to be omitted from University Registers, which are known to be defective. The "Deed" likewise places Latimer's consecration beyond doubt, for, curiously enough, no other record of his consecration is known to exist, and those critics who delight to detect any flaw in the conduct or policy of the Reformers, have consequently maintained that Latimer never was consecrated at all. The consecration ought to have been regularly entered in Cranmer's Register; this Register is, however, kept with such extreme carelessness, that no argument can be founded upon its numerous omissions.[2] The mandate for restoring the temporalities is, of course, incontestible evidence of his consecration, as good as if it had been entered in all the episcopal registers of England; and as similar mandates were signed on the same day for restoring the temporalities of Hereford to Fox, and of Rochester to Hilsey, the presumption arises that all three were consecrated at the same time and place. Fox and Hilsey were consecrated at Winchester on September 26, 1535: and it may be accepted as certain that Latimer was consecrated along with them.[3] To

[1] Foxe, vol. vii. 540.

[2] Preface to Bramhall's *Works*, vol. iii.

[3] Such is the conclusion of Professor Stubbs in his *Registrum Sacrum Anglicanum*, p. 77: and every scholar will at once receive his decision as final.

show how little can be founded upon the omissions in Cranmer's Register, it may be noted that not one of the three consecrations is inserted, although it happens that in the cases of Fox and Hilsey, the fact has been regularly chronicled in the Registers of their respective dioceses.

The matter is not one of any momentous consequence, still it is a satisfaction to know that the technical charges alleged against the Reformers of irregularity in matters of ecclesiastical detail, are as groundless as the graver accusations sometimes advanced against their characters. It need scarcely be added that Latimer was consecrated according to the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church, no reform having yet been introduced into the ordinal of the Church of England, beyond the omission from it of the old oath of allegiance to the Pope, which had been abolished by Parliament.

We have, however, been somewhat anticipating the order of events. The royal writ for the election of a new Bishop of Worcester in the room of Ghinucci was probably issued some time early in August. There was as yet no Dean and Chapter of Worcester, and William Moore, the Prior of the Cathedral Church, presided at the election. No delay would occur at this part of the proceedings; and on August 20, Latimer was installed by the Prior as Bishop. The next step, the confirmation of the election, could not proceed without a Royal Commission, and Henry was absent from London. A fortnight passed; Latimer was anxious to begin his episcopal labours; but the royal authority was still wanting. Naturally, in his difficulty, Latimer had recourse to the King's Vicar-General in ecclesiastical affairs, and on September 4, he wrote as follows to Cromwell:—[1]

"Honourable Sir,—*Sis salvus in Christo,* and do certify your mastership how we" [Cranmer and I] "succeed in our matters.

[1] State Paper Office, *Chapter House Papers,* C. 3. 20, p. 476.

We have been here" [in London] "now all this fortnight in vain, obtaining as yet neither confirmation" [of the election], "nor yet of temporalities restitution. For lack of the royal assent with your signification, my lord of Canterbury cannot proceed; and we hear nothing of it, neither of Master Gostwyck" [Royal Commissioner for valuing all benefices], "nor otherwhere. For expedition of these things it had been better for us to have given attendance of your mastership still in the court" [Henry was then at Thornbury]: "and so we would have been glad to have done, if it had been seen to your mastership so to have appointed us. I did speak this day with Mr. Polstead" [another Royal Commissioner], "which hath no further instructions from your mastership yet, as he saith, but to receive our sureties for the first-fruits: and he is uncertain as yet what they shall be. And as touching my part in that behalf, I trust your mastership hath not forgotten my last suit, for the which I was minded to have gone to the King's grace myself; but the Queen's grace" [Anne Boleyn], "calling to remembrance at what end my lord of Salisbury" [Shaxton, new Bishop of that see] "was at, said I should not need to move the King, but that it should be enough to inform your mastership thereof. It shall be your mastership's pleasure whether I shall tarry your return hither, or whether this bearer shall tarry your leisure to bring further instruction from you. Thus I am bold to interrupt you, and yet not without great lothness, forasmuch as I consider your hourly business in matters of more weightiness than this. God preserve you long in health to God's pleasure, which is my daily prayer. My brother of Rochester" [Hilsey, former antagonist at Bristol now Bishop-elect of Rochester], "commendeth him most heartily unto you.

"Yours, "H. Latimer, elect."

This letter had the desired effect. Within a short time the necessary royal sanction was given to the election: Latimer was consecrated by Cranmer, at Winchester; took the Oath of Allegiance in accordance with the recent Act of Parliament, and on October 4, as we have seen, Henry signed the writ for the restoration of the temporalities of the see.

Latimer was now all anxiety to repair to his diocese, and commence his episcopal labours; but there were still im-

pediments in the way. His health was precarious; he was encumbered with invitations to preach; and there was important business to be transacted with Cromwell and Cranmer ere he could leave London. About the middle of October, therefore, he again writes to Cromwell.[1]

"Honourable Sir,—*Salutem in Salutis omnium Authore.* I was in a near disposition to an axess[2] yesterday, which letted me to come to your mastership for the draft you wot of. And now this day my lord of Westminster" [Benson, *last abbot* and *first dean* of Westminster] "hath put unto me to preach there with him, else he should be like to be disappointed. If you would of your goodness send it to me by this bearer, I would apply my little wit to the imitation of the same. And I will write and certify my lord of Canterbury according to your advertisement in all haste.

"Oct. [1535.] "Yours, Hug. Wygorn."

The letter here referred to as written by Latimer to Cranmer has not been preserved; but a passage in one of Cranmer's letters to Cromwell explains satisfactorily the nature of the *draft* alluded to. Writing on November 2, Cranmer says, "The Bishop of Worcester lately wrote unto me in your name, that I looked upon the King's business through my fingers, doing nothing in that matter wherefore we were sent for unto Winchester; and I marvel not that you do so think, which knoweth not what I have done;"[3] and then he explains that he had already carefully drawn up articles upon the Pope's authority to furnish materials for preachers ill-acquainted with the subject. The *draft*, therefore, was some similar code of instructions for the use of the clergy, which Cromwell had been com-

[1] State Paper Office, *ubi supra*, p. 479.

[2] For *axess*, Dr. Corrie, in his edition of Latimer's *Remains*, has printed conjecturally *illness*. The writing is, to be sure, execrable: but the original seems certainly to resemble *axies*, or *axess*. The *accesse* is an old English term for the *ague*, used not unfrequently by Chaucer; there can be little doubt, therefore, that this should be accepted as the true reading of the passage.

[3] Cranmer's *Letters*, No. 160.

piling; and we know that it was for the purpose of consulting on the best methods of teaching the people why the Papal Supremacy had been abolished, that Henry had summoned his Bishops to meet him at Winchester. Once more Latimer writes to Cromwell on the same subject, as he is just on the eve of departing for his diocese.

"Honourable Sir,—*Salutem.* And I pray you forgive me for that I have not, according to my duty, delivered unto you this *draft* before this time; I have been so distract in preparing homewards, etc.: God preserve you long to his pleasure in health and well-doing.

"Yours, to his little power, H. Wygorn.

"*Postrid: Sanctiss: Sutorum*"[1] (day after St. Crispin's Day, Oct. 26). "If your mastership have the old seal of my office, I would recompense you according to the weight."[1]

By the beginning of November we may suppose Latimer had completed his preparations, and had left London for his diocese. Of his proceedings for the next three months till his return to London when Parliament re-assembled, we have no detailed account; but it may be taken for granted that he was entirely absorbed in the endless duties of his see, which, after the virtual interregnum of half-a-century, must have been a very Augean stable of abuses. It was in the careful discharge of these humble duties, of merely local consequence, that Latimer's usefulness as a Reforming Bishop largely consisted; and he seems to have devoted his whole time and energy to them: but history seldom preserves the memory of that commonplace routine, which is after all the main staple and occupation even of the most important life. All Latimer's energy, and skill, and patience would be tasked to the uttermost in ruling

[1] State Paper Office, *ubi supra*, p. 477. The arms of the see of Worcester, engraven on the seal, were "argent, ten torteauxes, four, three, two, one, gules:" these red drops signifying the eucharist, according to heralds.

and reforming a diocese so long accustomed to the licence of uncontrolled freedom, where the monks and the priests had hitherto reigned supreme, and ignorance and superstition had flourished for ages. In the midst of these tedious and vexatious labours, Christmas would come with an agreeable summons to rest and relaxation. The reader has not forgotten Latimer's pleasant anticipations of keeping a merry Christmas with his parishioners in West Kington, so woefully embittered by Stokesley's vindictive malice: and now that he had no enemy to fear, and had ample resources, we may be sure that the ancient halls of Hartlebury would echo the joyous greetings of a long-disused hospitality. During the whole of his brief episcopate, indeed, the proper observance of Christmas was always a matter of anxiety to Latimer; and no hospitable old English usage, no kindly benevolence to the poor, would be neglected by him: Christmas would not be shorn of any of its wonted cheer so long as he presided in Hartlebury.

It was also customary in those times for the people and the clergy to offer some presents to their Bishop on New Year's-day, in token of their esteem; and Latimer, in the subsequent years of his episcopate, received on these occasions many valuable proofs of the respect of those whom he ruled. The Bishops, on their part, were likewise expected by the custom of the times to present some New Year's-gift to Henry; and their gifts to a sovereign who was constantly suffering from impecuniosity, naturally consisted of liberal sums of money. The richer Bishops offered as much as £750 of our money; and the great Abbey of Westminster contributed £900[1] as their New Year's-gift to propitiate Henry's favour. Latimer's gift in future years was £20, equal to £300 in our day: but on

[1] See Strype, *Eccl. Mem.* I. pt. i, p. 211.

this, the first New Year's-day after his elevation to a bishopric, he transmitted to the King, according to Foxe, a very singular offering, such as seldom finds its way into royal coffers.

"There was then," says the martyrologist, "and remaineth still, an ancient custom received from the old Romans, that upon New Year's-day, being the first day of January, every bishop with some handsome New Year's-gift should gratify the King; and so they did, some with gold, some with silver, some with a purse full of money, and some one thing, some another. But Master Latimer, being Bishop of Worcester then, among the rest, presented a New Testament for his New Year's-gift, with a napkin having this posy" [inscription] "about it, *Fornicatores et adulteros judicabit Dominus*" [fornicators and adulterers God will judge].[1]

Foxe has not given any authority for this anecdote, which like some more of the good martyrologist's stories must be set down as unauthenticated gossip. The New Year of 1536 was, however, the only occasion during Latimer's episcopate on which he could have brought such a charge against Henry; for just at that time the King's neglect of Anne Boleyn and his open preference for Jane Seymour had become the topic of general remark and speculation at court. And in any case the anecdote may unquestionably be considered a tribute to Latimer's well-known intrepidity, a sort of public recognition that he alone possessed the courage, which, if necessary, would rebuke the vices of his sovereign as sternly as John the Baptist rebuked those of Herod.

Among the first matters to attract Latimer's attention in his diocese was the position of the Prior of the Abbey of Worcester, the same William Moore whom we have just seen presiding at Latimer's election. He was the most important personage in the diocese next to the Bishop,

[1] Foxe, vol. vii.

and could do much to promote or to retard Latimer's usefulness. Moore seems to have been devoted chiefly to his own enjoyment, and not only indifferent to the great religious movement of the time, but even careless of the interests of the great house over which he presided. Such a man was of course only an obstruction in Latimer's way. He had, however, been guilty of some offence which exposed him to deprivation, and even to death; he had been suspended from his office, and there was hope, therefore, of his place being filled by some one less likely to impede Latimer. Henry did not wish to be severe on the poor man, and was anxious that Latimer should be consulted about restoring him again to his office. As soon, therefore, as his Christmas festivities were ended, Latimer addressed to Cromwell the following shrewd and sensible letter on this somewhat delicate subject:—

"After my right hearty commendations to your mastership. Where" [whereas] "you write unto me that the King's grace, moved with pity, and having also divers other considerations stirring to the same, is inclined to restore the Prior of Worcester to his room and office again; desiring nevertheless to know my opinion therein in writing to you, or ever his Grace do resolve himself thoroughly upon the same: in consideration whereof, I do you to understand, by this letter written with my own hand, that I rejoice not a little to perceive that the King's grace is moved of his gracious goodness to have pity of that simple man. But there is divers degrees in pity, as I think; for if that great crime" [probably some denial of the Royal Supremacy] "was not alonely detected, but also proved against him, as you do say it was, then to pardon him of his life is to show a *great* pity. To add thereunto a competent living for himself and one to wait upon him, is to show a *greater* pity.[1] And so far forth, I wish,

[1] Moore was pardoned, and was actually allowed two of the manors of the priory, with plate, etc.; his debts were paid, he received a present of 1,000 marks, and had a monk to wait on him and say mass. Like other annuitants, the lucky prior long enjoyed his good fortune: he lived, indeed, to see Cromwell beheaded, and Latimer burned. See Dugdale, vol i., p. 581.

and have done always, that the King's highness would extend his pity unto him. And verily I marvel greatly if his heart be so strong, so flinty, that so great pity and compassion as it is cannot reconcile him to the King's highness sufficiently. Marry, to burden him with his busy office again, and to clog him again with his great cure, namely now, he being so debile, so weak, and of so great age as you write him to be, whether it be to pity him or to trouble him, I cannot say. But for mine opinion in this behalf (to say what I think without fiction to my prince), the King's grace had need after such a sort to be pitiful toward one man, that his Grace seem not for pitying of one to be pitiless toward many: I mean the whole house of" [and ?] "the country thereabout. For either he is able to discharge that great cure, and can serve God and the King sufficiently therein, or not: if he be able and can, it were well done that the King's grace would extend his pity thereunto; if not, it were great pity to trouble him, and to charge him with that thing now, in his extreme age, which thing (perchance) he was never able to discharge in midst of his youth.

"But now, what ability is required to discharging of such an office, no man can tell better than the King's grace himself. Again: what ability this man hath to discharge such an office, no man can tell better than my lord of Canterbury, or than Mr. Doctor Lee" [one of Cromwell's visitors], "which both did visit there, and knoweth both what he can do, and what the house needeth to be done. And I think you yourself is not ignorant therein; for I have heard you speak your mind both of their house, and also of him. And this is all that I can say. If I have one there to help me, I shall do the more good: if not I shall boggle" [manage] "myself as well as I can. When I perceived that there was no hope to speak for this man, I named two other to the King, of the which two his Grace preferred Coton;[1] and I certified you his highness's pleasure thereof, and the Queen's grace hath remembered" [reminded] "you since. As God and the King will have it, so be it, Amen: for if they two be well served, I am right well pleased; and thus I commit you to God's preservation. This messenger maketh so great haste, that I have leisure to write no better" [the writing is no worse than usual, however].

"Yours to command, Hugh of Worcester.

"*Sabbato post Epiphaniam proximo*" (January 8, 1536).

[1] Perhaps John Coton, Prior of Dunstable. Rymer, xiv. 489.

Latimer, one is glad to know, had a prior appointed who was well-disposed to assist him in his work of reforming and teaching the diocese. Cranmer had already suggested two "men of eminent learning and good conversation," as suitable successors of the deprived prior, Henry Holbech, of Croyland Abbey, and Richard Gorton, of the Abbey of Burton-on-Trent. Henry selected Holbech, who was probably the unnamed candidate referred to in Latimer's letter; and in March of this year of 1536 he was appointed Prior of Worcester Abbey, and performed his duties so admirably that on Latimer's recommendation he was in 1538 nominated suffragan Bishop of Bristol; retaining, however, his office as Prior till the suppression of religious houses, when he became the first Dean of Worcester.

On the same day that Latimer thus wrote to Cromwell, Catherine of Arragon died peacefully at Kimbolton Castle, protesting to the last that she, and no other, was Henry's true and lawful wife. However widely opinions differ as to the merits of the great question connected with her marriage, all agree in recognising the many virtues of the sorely-tried and much-injured queen. Her death was an occurrence of national importance; and politicians were once again filled with eager excitement, and anticipations of change. It was well-known that Henry felt keenly the seeming danger of his position: he had, by his open rejection of the Papal Supremacy, isolated himself from the other sovereigns of Europe. It was also notorious that Anne Boleyn was no longer supreme mistress of Henry's heart; and to the adherents of the Papal see it appeared possible to remove the hated Anne out of the way, and thus bring about a reconciliation between Henry and the Pope. The emperor was willing and even anxious to be reconciled to Henry. Hints of a possible re-union with

Rome were ingeniously suggested by the diplomatists; and if the Romish party did not actually conspire to plot against Anne's life, as has been sometimes asserted, there is no doubt whatever that they rejoiced most sincerely in the prospect of her downfall. Even the infallible see itself condescended to court Henry, and to apologise in the blandest terms for the unpleasantly rigorous measures which had been employed in the long controversy about the royal marriage. Henry, however, was not to be so easily gained over: "he had not acted," he declared, "on such slight grounds that he could in any sort depart from what he had done; having founded himself on the laws of God, of nature, and honesty, with the concurrence of his Parliament."[1] The overtures of reconciliation therefore were rejected; and Henry, from policy, as well as from growing conviction, was compelled to draw closer to the position taken up by the Reformers.

On February 4, 1536, Parliament and Convocation reassembled after a prorogation of upwards of a year; and Latimer would of course be summoned to London, to take his seat for the first time as a Peer of the Realm. The affairs of religion still occupied the chief attention of the legislature. One of the last acts of their previous session had transferred to the Crown that authority for visiting and reforming religious houses, which had formerly been the exclusive prerogative of the Pope; and, during the close of the year 1535, ecclesiastical visitors, nominated by Cromwell, had been busy inspecting all the smaller religious houses, and prying with somewhat rough and irrepressible curiosity into the morals and pursuits of their inmates. The instructions on which the visitors acted have been printed by Burnet; and while they abundantly

[1] Burnet, iii. 227.

prove that Cromwell was well aware of the vices likely to be found in the security of the cloister, they do not confirm the assertion occasionally made, that the suppression of the monasteries, and not their reformation, was designed from the first. When Parliament re-assembled, the reports of Cromwell's Commissioners were read, disclosing a state of ignorance and vice such as had long been suspected, but which it now seemed impossible further to tolerate. "Down with them, down with them," [1] resounded on all sides: no one ventured to defend them; and Parliament proceeded to deal with them in a very summary manner. "Forasmuch," said the famous Act (27 Henry VIII. c. 28), "as manifest sin, vicious, carnal, and abominable living is daily used and committed amongst the little and small abbeys, whereby the governors of such religious houses, spoil, destroy, consume, and utterly waste their churches, farms, cattle, etc., to the high displeasure of Almighty God, slander of good religion, and to the great infamy of the King's highness and the realm: . . . and forasmuch as continual visitations, for two hundred years and more, for reformation of such carnal and abominable living have been all in vain, and it only increased and augmented, so that without suppressing them there could be no reformation of them." . . . . In short, the smaller monasteries were handed over to the King and his heirs to be treated at his pleasure.

It is unnecessary here to enter into any minute examination and defence of the visitors' reports. It may be admitted that the visitation was in some cases conducted in a summary fashion, the visitors evidently enjoying the excitement and sport of their occupation; [2] and it is unques-

[1] Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 123.
[2] See the *Letters on the Suppression of the Monasteries.*

tionable that the monks, as the great upholders of the Papal Supremacy, were peculiarly obnoxious to Henry, and that their revenues were by no means unacceptable to his exhausted treasury. Some allowance may, therefore, be made for haste and exaggeration on the part of the visitors; but whatever deduction may be claimed from the sweeping declarations of the statute, no reasonable doubt can be entertained of their substantial truth. The gross ignorance and licentiousness that had grown up in the idle seclusion of the religious houses, can be established by the concurrent testimony of an overwhelming body of witnesses. The letters of the visitors have been questioned by men who admire the old monastic system for virtues which it had long ceased to possess; but the same charges had been adduced against the smaller houses for ages; many of them had been already suppressed on the same grounds: Convocation and provincial councils had attempted in vain to reform their superabundant corruptions; and they fell at last undefended, because the spirit of piety, that had led to their establishment, had departed from them, and its place had been usurped by ignorance and depravity.

None had been louder than Latimer in denouncing the vice and ignorance of the religious orders; but he by no means approved of the summary manner in which funds consecrated to religious purposes were diverted to feed the extravagance of the Court and the rapacity of the courtiers. He was anxious to see at least a few of these houses in every county cleansed from all their abuses, and liberally endowed for the sacred uses of piety and hospitality, and the religious education of the young. It is even said that at this critical period, instigated by Queen Anne (who, under his influence, had begun to imitate the devotional

tendencies of her predecessor), he ventured to preach against the proposed appropriation of the revenues of the religious houses to mere secular purposes.[1] It is at all events certain, that with characteristic boldness and honesty, he remonstrated publicly against the base purposes to which some of the religious houses had been desecrated by the King. Some of the abbeys, it seemed, were appropriated for the use of the royal stud, and Latimer indignantly protested that "abbeys were ordained for the comfort of the poor; and it was not decent that the King's horses should be kept in them, and the living of poor men be thereby minished and taken away." The courtiers reproved him for his presumption in venturing to censure the acts of the sovereign, but the preacher was not to be silenced. "I spake my conscience," he replied, "as God's word directed me;" and he continued to maintain that it "could not be for the honour of the King to take away the right of the poor."[2] A few years later he again, as we shall see, urgently entreated Cromwell to spare the Abbey of Great Malvern, "not for monkery; God forbid! but to maintain teaching, preaching, study with praying, and good housekeeping. Alas, my good lord," he continues, "shall we not see two or three houses in every shire changed to such remedy?"[3] Opinions may differ as to the wisdom of Latimer's suggestions: many may believe that the bolder policy of "pulling down the nests," of utterly abolishing what had been proved incapable of reformation, was the wiser one; but his attitude on this important question is strikingly in keeping with the whole tenor of his character as we have hitherto seen it exhibited in his life.

[1] Collier, iv. 331; no authority is given.
[2] Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 93.
[3] Latimer's *Remains*, p. 410.

In the absence of any official record of Latimer's occupation during this spring, we are much indebted for some curious notices of him to the letter of a gossiping London curate that has been fortunately preserved among the Cotton MSS.[1] Thomas Dorset, curate of St. Margaret's in the Lothbury, having, as he ingenuously admits, "nothing to do," resolved to go to Lambeth to the Archbishop's Palace, and see what was passing there.

"So," he proceeds, "I took a wherry at Paul's Wharf, wherein also was already a doctor named Doctor Crookhorne which was sent for to come to the Bishop of Canterbury: and he, before the three bishops of Canterbury, of *Worcester* (Latimer) and Salisbury, confessed that he was rapt into heaven where he saw the Trinity sitting in a pall or mantle or cope of blue colour etc."

The reader need not be troubled further with the visions of this crazy fanatic.

"Then was there one Lambert" [who will come before us again] "within a seven days and later after that, which was detect of heresy to the three bishops. His articles was this that it was sin to pray to saints. Then came he to his answer. And the three bishops could not say that it was *necessary* or *needful*" [to pray to saints]; "but yet he might not make sin of it; and if he would agree to that he might have been gone by and by, but he would not.

"Then was he commanded to ward in the porter lodge, to remain there from that Monday till Friday night. Then he was set at large to go whither he would. He came thither back again the morrow to know the Bishops' pleasure, whether he was all free or not; and then they opposed him again, and he abode by it" [by his article, that it was sin to pray to saints]; "yet could they find" [prove] "it by no Scripture that we *ought* to do it. The Bishop of Worcester *(Latimer)* was most extreme against him" [surely not: more probably it was Shaxton, who had a very hot temper, as his letters show], "so he was put to ward again; and on the next morning

[1] *Cleopatra* E. iv. 110; printed among the *Letters on the Suppression of the Monasteries*, not very correctly.

which was Sunday, they sent both him and his articles to my Lord Chancellor, and there he remaineth in prison yet. My Lord of Norfolk, the Earl of Essex and the Count of Oxford wrote to those Bishops against him, and for that cause men suppose they handled him as to please them to get favour, which thing hath within this little while done great hurt to the truth, but what shall come of him God knoweth only."

The reader must bear in mind that much of this is mere gossip, without any authority. It is obvious, for example, that the writer could not possibly know the contents of private letters from the Duke of Norfolk to Cranmer; and it is in the last degree incredible that Latimer and the other Bishops would act as they did merely to secure the favour of a few courtiers. It must also be remembered that Lambert and the curate belonged to the party of advanced Protestants, who were anxious to move much more rapidly in the Reformation of religion than Cranmer or Latimer, and who were unhappily inclined to look upon all who did not agree with them in everything as enemies to the truth. After some other matter of no interest to us, the writer proceeds :—

"On Sunday last" [probably March 12, 1536], "the Bishop of Worcester *(Latimer)* preached at Paul's Cross; and he said that bishops, abbots, priors, parsons, canons resident, priests and all, were strong thieves, yea dukes, lords and all. The King, quod he, made a marvellous good Act of Parliament that certain men should sow every of them two acres of hemp; but it were all too little were it so much more to hang the thieves in England. Bishops, abbots, with such other, should not have so many servants, nor so many dishes; but to go to their first foundation, to keep hospitality, to feed the needy people; not jolly fellows with golden chains and velvet gowns."

A sufficiently bold sermon, such as we have already heard Latimer deliver at West Kington, but not the utter-

ance, assuredly, of any time-serving sycophant eager to ingratiate himself with the courtiers of Henry.[1]

On April 14, Parliament was dissolved. It had been summoned in November, 1529, and had thus sat for nearly seven years, an unusually long life for an English Parliament at any period, and unprecedentedly long in the age of the Tudors. The unanimous verdict of modern Europe has placed the Long Parliament at the head of all Parliaments, as the pride and model of all representative institutions. But, in truth, England owes far more to the Parliament of the sixteenth century, which achieved for her religious freedom, than to the much-vaunted Parliament of the seventeenth, which with infinite bloodshed, and in a bungling and imperfect fashion laid the foundations of our civil liberties. The early Parliament achieved the true liberty of England: "they found England in dependency on a foreign power; they left it a free nation."[2] They abolished that spiritual bondage which had so long kept the souls of the people in slavery and darkness. They defied the Pope; they suppressed the monasteries; they had not hesitated to send to the block the most distinguished defenders of the Papal system; they had curtailed the wealth and prerogatives of the clergy. They had not, indeed, proceeded far in the reformation of religion; but in establishing the great principle of the supremacy of the Crown in the room of the old assumption of the infallibility and supremacy of the Pope, they had laid a deep and firm foundation, on which by slow

[1] The date of Dorset's letter has been often, erroneously, given as 1538, the reference to Lambert's trial having apparently perplexed those who knew only of his *second* trial in 1538. The letter is dated March 13, and speaks of Henry's coming in to address Parliament; now there was no parliament in March, 1537 or '38, and before March, 1539, Lambert had been burnt. The date is, therefore, certain and indisputable.

[2] Froude, vol. ii.

degrees and under happier auspices, the great fabric of toleration and religious purity was to rise.

The new Parliament was summoned for June 8; but before it assembled, the reign of Henry had been stained, with its first dark, indelible blot, the execution of Anne Boleyn. Into the long and fiercely-debated question of her guilt or innocence, it is unnecessary for us here to enter at length. Anne may have had her faults; she may have been giddy and thoughtless, so as to provoke others to address her in language of familiar freedom unbecoming their station and her position as the wife of a jealous husband. But allowing full force to all that Mr. Froude has alleged in justification of Henry's procedure, who has ever really doubted that Anne's execution was very like a murder under form of law? "Her chief fault," Fuller has said, with equal truth and quaintness, "was Henry's too great fondness for another." Henry himself, indeed, has furnished the most unanswerable refutation of the pleas of his apologists. By marrying Jane Seymour (who had been for months the chief object of his affection) the day after Anne's execution, he has rendered it for ever impossible for any evidence to demonstrate his innocence. The secret preparations for the bloody deed have never been all unravelled: it is certain that her arrest and execution were no hasty measures, dictated by sudden discovery of her guilt, but were carefully planned weeks before; and it seems highly probable that equal care has been taken to destroy most of the documents that might have cast any light upon the perplexing subject. The attitude of Latimer and Cranmer and Cromwell in reference to Anne's execution is not the least embarrassing side of this intricate question. Without claiming Anne as a decided and intelligent adherent of the Reformed opinions, she had un-

questionably on more than one occasion befriended the Reformers; she had shown a marked pleasure in listening to Latimer; her disgrace and death were sure to be hailed with triumphant glee by the Romanist party; and one might have expected, therefore, from Latimer or Cranmer, some interference in her behalf, or at least some attempt to defend her character. Latimer, however, makes no allusion to her in any of his subsequent sermons or letters that have been preserved: he may not have believed her guilty; he certainly has not intimated his conviction that she was innocent. How Cranmer acted, all the world knows. Every one has read the famous letter in which the gentle primate has left so faithful a picture of his own state of mind, hopelessly embarrassed between esteem for Anne, horror of the crime alleged against her, and suspicion that the charge was true: a letter which evidently perplexed Cranmer to pen as much as it has perplexed historians to interpret it. The truth seems to be that neither of these friendly prelates was ever fully informed of the circumstances alleged against Anne: they had no knowledge of her guilt beyond what was communicated to them by Cromwell; and his authority, to men who had so long known and so implicitly trusted him, would be sufficient, if not to produce conviction, at least to secure silence. Cranmer, indeed, from his position as primate, was required to lend his assistance, and to give the sanction of his name and character to the divorce of Anne. But the charge of adultery and incest was not brought against the unhappy Queen in Cranmer's court. Anne simply appeared before him, and declared that there were lawful impediments to her marriage with Henry. What these were, the Archbishop does not appear to have inquired; and subsequent historians have in vain exhausted their ingenuity

in uncertain conjectures. On the strength of the Queen's confession, and without further inquiry, Cranmer pronounced his sentence, that "the marriage between the King's grace and the most excellent lady Anne was never good, but utterly void and of none effect;" a sentence curiously at variance with the other accusation against the unhappy Queen, for if she had never really been Henry's wife, then it was plain that she could never have committed that crime of adultery for which she was executed.

The death of Anne gave fresh vigour to the hopes of the Papal party. The great obstacle to any reconciliation with the Papal See was now removed; and it seemed possible that by judicious measures Henry might be regained to his former allegiance. Overtures were made from Rome, to which Henry listened, not altogether unwillingly, in spite of the resolute declaration which we recently read. Campeggio, the deprived Bishop of Salisbury, was cheered with visions of recovering his see;[1] and ambitious Churchmen, believing that the tide of affairs in England had turned, began to dream of honours and wealth. An occurrence wholly unexpected dashed all these hopes to the ground. Just at this very crisis, there reached Henry, Cardinal Pole's famous book on the *Unity of the Church*. Written years before, when the attitude of affairs had been entirely different, it only came to England in June, 1536, and its words of fierce denunciation rendered all hope of reconciliation with Rome for the time impossible. It urged the people to rebel against a tyrant more wicked than Saul who killed the priests, more sacrilegious than Dathan and Abiram who withstood the ordinance of God. It stigmatised him as "the vilest of plunderers, a thief and a robber," surrounded by bishops who were robbers and

[1] *State Papers*, Henry VIII., vol. vii., 656, note.

murderers, one for whose crimes no penalty would be adequate. Pole had written in defence of Henry's marriage with Catherine; but the accident which had so long delayed the delivery of his book, singularly enough, must have made him seem to be the advocate of Anne; and the King must have winced under the stern appeals of the Cardinal's impetuous eloquence. It was a masterpiece of sarcastic and indignant invective; but for the time it ruined all the fond hopes of the Romish party in England.

The new Parliament assembled June 8; and was mainly occupied with those legislative enactments which were rendered necessary by the divorce and execution of Queen Anne.

On June 9, there was also assembled the first Convocation since the overthrow of the Papal Supremacy. It was a great occasion, and Cranmer, determining to make the most of it, had wisely selected Latimer to preach the opening sermon. No better choice could have been made in England; no preacher saw more clearly the many gross abuses that still remained to be reformed; no one could denounce them with happier irony or more unsparing severity. The complexion of the time called for boldness, and Latimer was not likely to err through excess of timidity. All the associations of the place would add strength to his invective. Four years before, he had stood at the bar, accused of heretical teaching; and in front of him, as he spoke, there sat conspicuous the men who had sought his life, and who were the determined defenders of those abuses that had so long tainted and depraved the religion of the country. Urged by so many impulses, the preacher rose to the greatness of the occasion; and his eloquence, bold as that of the old Jewish prophets, stirred the heart of the English nation to its very depths.

He selected as his text the parable of the unjust steward, a sufficient intimation of the character of the coming sermon. The parable naturally led him to speak of the duties of the clergy, and to inquire whether they had been faithful in discharging them or not. The time had been when Latimer ran an imminent risk of being burned for venturing to insinuate the charge of unfaithfulness against the clergy; but now the rulers of the Church, who had been chiefly in fault, must listen in silence to words such as have been but seldom uttered in the ears of Convocation.

"Who is a true and faithful steward?" asked the preacher. "He is one that coineth no new money, but taketh it ready coined of the good man of the house, and neither changeth it nor clippeth it, but spendeth even the self-same that he had of his Lord, and spendeth it as his Lord's commandment is; neither to his own vantage uttering it, nor as the lewd servant did, hiding it in the ground. Brethren," he proceeded, "I pray you ponder and examine well, whether our bishops and abbots, prelates and curates, have been hitherto faithful stewards or no; whether yet many of them be as they should be or no. Tell me now (as your conscience leadeth you), were there not some that despising the money of the Lord, either coined new themselves, or else uttered abroad newly coined of other? Sometime either adulterating the Word of God, or else mingling it? Sometime in the stead of God's Word blowing out the dreams of men? While they preached thus to the people, that the redemption that cometh by Christ's death serveth only them that died before His coming, that were in the time of the Old Testament; and that *now*, redemption and forgiveness of sins, purchased by money, and devised by men, is of efficacy, and not redemption purchased by Christ? While they preached, that dead images not only ought to be covered with gold, but also ought of all faithful and Christian people, (yea in this scarceness and penury of all things) to be clad with silk garments, and these laden with precious jewels; and besides this ought to be lighted with wax candles, both within the church and without the church, yea, and at noondays? Whereas in the meantime we see Christ's faithful and lively images, bought with

no less price than with His most precious blood, to be an hungered, a-thirst, a-cold, and to lie in darkness, wrapped in all wretchedness, yea, to lie there till death take away their miseries: while they preached these will-works, that come but of our own devotion, although they be not so necessary as the works of mercy, and the precepts of God, yet they said, and in the pulpit, that will-works were more principal, more excellent (and plainly to utter what they mean), more acceptable to God than works of mercy; as though now man's inventions and fancies could please God better than God's precepts, or strange things better than His own: while they thus preached that more fruit, more devotion cometh of the beholding of an image, though it be but a *Paternoster* while, than is gotten by reading and contemplation in Scripture, though ye read and contemplate therein seven years' space: finally, while they thus preached, souls tormented in purgatory to have most need of our help, and that they can have no aid, but of us in this world; I let pass to speak of much other such like counterfeit doctrine, which hath been blasted and blown out by some for the space of three hours together. Be these the Christian and Divine mysteries, and not rather the dreams of men? Be these the faithful dispensers of God's mysteries, and not rather false dissipators of them? whom God never put in office, but rather the devil set them over a miserable family, over a house miserably ordered and entreated. Happy were the people if such preached seldom.

"The end of your convocation shall shew what ye have done; the fruit that shall come of your consultation shall shew what generation ye be of. For what have ye done hitherto, I pray you, these seven years and more? What have ye brought forth? What fruit is come of your long and great assembly? What one thing that the people of England hath been the better of a hair; or you yourselves, either more accepted before God, or better discharged toward the people committed unto your care? For that the people is better learned and taught now, than they were in time past, to whether of these ought we to attribute it, to your industry, or to the providence of God, and the foreseeing of the King's grace? Ought we to thank you, or the King's highness? Whether stirred other first, you the King, that he might preach, or he you by his letters that ye should preach oftener? Is it unknown, think ye, how both ye and your curates were, in manner, by violence enforced to let books, to be made, not by you, but by profane and lay persons; to let them I say, be sold abroad, and read for the instruction of the people? . .

"Now, I pray you in God's name, what did you, so great fathers, so many, so long a season, so oft assembled together? What went you about? What would ye have brought to pass? Two things taken away—the one, that ye (which I heard) burned a dead man" [Tracy]; "the other that ye (which I felt) went about to burn one being alive" [Latimer]: "him, because he did, I cannot tell how, in his testament withstand your profit; in other points, as I have heard, a very good man; reported to be of an honest life while he lived, full of good works, good both to the clergy, and also to the laity: this other, which truly never hurt any of you, ye would have raked in the coals, because he would not subscribe to certain articles that took away the supremacy of the King:—take away these two noble acts, and there is nothing else left that ye went about, that I know, saving that I now remember that somewhat ye attempted against Erasmus, albeit as yet nothing is come to light. Ye have oft sat in consultation, but what have ye done? Ye have had many things in deliberation, but what one is put forth, whereby Christ is more glorified, or else Christ's people made more holy? I appeal to your own conscience."

"The children of this world," the parable declared, "were wiser in their generation than the children of light:" and the history of the Church, Latimer proceeded to show, contained abundant illustrations of the maxim. The Church was full of the abuses which the children of the world had introduced for their own profit. They had invented "canonisations and expectations, pardons, stationaries, and jubilaries." Wisest of all, however, were those that "begot and brought forth our old purgatory pick-purse, that was swaged" [assuaged] "and cooled with a Franciscan's cowl, put upon a dead man's back, to the fourth part of his sins. It was a pleasant fiction, and, from the beginning, so profitable to the feigners of it, that almost, I dare boldly say, there hath been no emperor that hath gotten more by taxes and tollages of them that were alive, than these, the very and right-begotten

sons of the world, got by dead men's tributes and gifts."

Then, rising into more earnest exhortation, he urged his hearers to diligence in reforming what had been too long suffered to injure the purity of the Church.

"Go ye to, good brethren and fathers: for the love of God, go ye to; and seeing we are here assembled, let us do something whereby we may be known to be the children of light. . . . Lift up your heads, brethren, and look about with your eyes, spy what things are to be reformed in the Church of England. Is it so hard, is it so great a matter for you to see many abuses in the clergy, many in the laity? Abuses in the Court of Arches, and in the Consistorial Courts of the Bishops; in the ceremonies so often defiled by superstition; in the holidays so generally abused by drunkenness and gambling; in the images, and pictures, and relics, and pilgrimages, extolled and encouraged by the clergy to the deception of the ignorant, in the religious rites of baptism and matrimony celebrated in an unknown tongue and not in the native language of the people; in the most solemn services of religion, masses, openly sold in violation of the most express ecclesiastical laws."

Such abuses as these were patent in every part of England, and to allow them to continue any longer, ruining the souls of the laity while replenishing the coffers of the clergy, was to act the part not of faithful stewards but of the dishonest steward who beat his fellow-servants because his Lord delayed his return. "But," said the preacher in conclusion, "be not deceived, God will come, God will come, He will not tarry long away. . . . Therefore, my brethren, leave the love of your profit; study for the glory and profit of Christ; seek in your consultations such things as pertain to Christ, and bring forth at the last somewhat that may please Christ. Feed ye tenderly, with all diligence, the flock of Christ. Preach truly the Word of God. Love the light, walk in the light, and so

be ye the children of light while ye are in this world, that ye may shine, in the world to come, bright as the sun."

The great German Reformer himself never spoke with more energy or greater plainness; and one may well suppose that the members of Convocation were startled with an oration so widely different from the ordinary decorous and commonplace addresses customary before such an audience. The sermon was of course in Latin; but it was speedily translated into English; and the preacher's words were read with avidity throughout the land. For the cause was eminently one that concerned the whole nation; and no preacher was a better representative of the national mind on the subject than Latimer. He had refrained altogether from any subtle discussions of what might be called profound theological questions; to him, as to the people at large, it was a question not of belief but of life; he complained not so much of what the Church taught, as of what the clergy practised; not so much of false doctrine corrupting the orthodoxy of the Church's creed, as of wretched falsehoods and impostures poisoning the religious life of the people. His eminently practical turn of mind happily led him to take exactly that view of the reformation of religion which was likely to attract the attention of his countrymen. Theological discussions on doctrines even of the utmost importance, have never excited so profound an interest in England as in some other countries; the national mind seems to have little aptitude for them, and in Latimer's time Englishmen were not sufficiently versed in Holy Scripture to be competent judges; but plain practical matters, such as those which the preacher pressed on the notice of Convocation, were within every one's capacity, and appealed to every one's experience; and it is not surprising that the eloquence of

the preacher evoked a loud response from the common people.

What were the thoughts that passed through the minds of the members of Convocation as they listened to Latimer? Did their hearts glow with the generous desire to repair the errors and faults of past generations? Were they ashamed of their career as false and unprofitable stewards? Or were they determined, at all hazards, to maintain those corruptions which furnished them with their princely revenues? Their deeds speedily showed whether they were to be considered "children of the world," or "children of the light." The Lower House of Convocation proceeded to business; and, as if actuated by the energy of Latimer's sermon, they compiled a lengthy list of evils in doctrine and in practice that urgently called for a reform. But the *gravamina* of Convocation were very different from the abuses which Latimer had condemned. It was not the monstrous doctrine of purgatory, the delusion that a man who had spent his life in sin could be saved after death by money and masses; it was not such teaching as this that they desired to see reformed. The fatal and dangerous heresies which they hoped the Bishops would summarily suppress were such as these, "that priests should be allowed to marry," "that the laity should receive the communion in both kinds," "that images ought not to be reverenced," "that it was not a sin to eat meat in Lent," "that auricular confession, absolution, and penance were neither necessary nor beneficial," "that prayer to the saints was as vain as throwing a stone against the wind," "that holy water, holy bread, hallowed candles and such like things, were mere ignorant delusions," etc. These and other opinions, tinged a little in some matters, with the violence of the Continental Anabaptists, yet not inaptly

styled by Fuller, "the Protestant religion in the ore," were the dark blots which Convocation wished to expunge from the fair face of the Church; and, that there might be no doubt of their intentions, they complained of the circulation of what they styled heretical books (of which the Bible in English was of course the chief), and of the patronage extended to men who "were suspected both for belief and manners." It was plain, therefore, that Convocation having consented with the worst possible grace to acknowledge the Royal Supremacy, was determined to resist to the uttermost all attempts at any further reformation of religion.

And yet there were not wanting signs of the times which might have convinced them of the hopeless nature of the cause to which they were thus committing themselves. On all sides the adherents of the Reformation were increasing in numbers and influence; and with such a sovereign as Henry on the throne, it was sheer folly to hope that the old supremacy of the Church could ever be restored. One trivial incident that occurred when they assembled to deliberate might have sufficed to show them that they were living in changed times. Cromwell, the King's Vicar-General in ecclesiastical matters, was unable to be present at their first meeting, but sent Petre, one of the visitors of the monasteries as his representative; and this man, the *deputy of a deputy*, claimed and obtained as his right, the chief seat in the assembly next to the Archbishop, to the great indignation of many of the members. Next day, Cromwell appeared in person, and, in virtue of his office, seated himself above them all: a plain indication that the Royal Supremacy was not a mere empty phrase, and that Henry did not intend to sleep over his new prerogative.

Convocation had been summoned for a purpose of prime importance, to compile a creed and a canon of religious ceremonies suitable to the altered state of the times. When Parliament abolished the Papal Supremacy in England, they had expressly protested their unshaken attachment to the old creed and worship of the Church. But Parliament was unable to restrain the course of public opinion; and even Henry himself could not avoid being influenced by the loud demand for reformation that now began to rise from almost every part of the country. The voice of Latimer exposing the endless practical abuses of the clergy, had produced an impression all the more powerful because the facts were undeniable; and the laity impatiently called for relief from a burden that was become intolerable. And, in London especially, there were other reformers, bolder than Latimer; men well versed in the theology of the Reformation on the Continent, who saw that no reformation would be of avail which stopped short with abolishing external abuses, and who demanded, therefore, the removal from the creed of the Church of those doctrinal errors from which the practical corruptions had sprung. The whole country was ringing with the din of theological strife; doctrines and ceremonies were fiercely debated; division and discord prevailed, and seemed almost to threaten a civil war. Modern rulers would probably regard this as the normal and proper religious condition of a country; but Henry's theory of his duty as King of England compelled him to devise some means for restoring unity and peace, and this was the great problem submitted to the Convocation of 1536.

It was a subject evidently of the greatest importance both in its immediate and its ultimate bearings on the Church of England; and as Latimer was present as a

member of Convocation, it is natural that their proceedings should engage much of our attention. By a piece of rare good fortune, moreover, a report of the debates on this momentous question has been preserved to us by one who was present and shared in them. Alexander Alane, or Alesius, a Scotch theologian, and a friend of Luther and Melancthon,[1] was taken down to the Convocation by Cromwell, and to him are we indebted for a graphic and interesting picture of the first debate in the first Protestant Convocation of the Church of England. On Cromwell's entrance, all the bishops and prelates rose up and did obeisance to him as vicar-general; and when he had returned their salutation, he sat down in the highest place, and the proceedings began. "Right against Cromwell," to use the words of Alesius, "sate the Archbishop of Canterbury, after him the Archbishop of York [Lee], and then London [Stokesley], Lincoln [Longland], Salisbury [Shaxton], Bath [Clerk], Ely [Goodrich], Hereford [Fox], Chichester [Sampson], Rochester [Hilsey], and Worcester [*Latimer*], and certain other whose names I have forgotten; all these did sit at a table covered with a carpet, with certain priests standing about them."

Cromwell, in an admirable address, reminded them of the purpose for which they were assembled, viz.: "to determine certain controversies which at this time be moved concerning the Christian religion and faith, not only in this realm, but also in all nations through the world."

[1] He had been driven from St. Andrew's for heresy, and after some years' residence in Germany, he came to England in 1535 at the invitation of Cranmer and Cromwell. Henry was very courteous to him, and made him Divinity-reader at Cambridge. Alesius, however, had conscientious scruples as to his position, and returned to London, where he practised as a physician: see his rare tract *On the Authority of the Word of God, etc.*

The King, he assured them, studied day and night to set a quietness in the Church, and he could not rest until all such controversies were fully debated and ended through the determination of Convocation and Parliament.

"And," he proceeded, "he desireth you, for Christ's sake, that all malice, obstinacy, and carnal respect set apart, ye will friendly and lovingly dispute among yourselves of the controversies moved in the Church, and *that ye will conclude all things by the Word of God*, without all bawling or scolding. Neither will His Majesty suffer the Scripture to be wrested and defaced by any glosses, any papistical laws, or by any authority of doctors or councils; and much less will he admit any articles or doctrines not contained in the Scriptures, but, approved only by continuance of time and old custom and by *unwritten verities* as ye were wont to do. His Majesty will give you high thanks if ye will set and conclude a godly and a perfect unity, whereunto this is the only way and mean, if ye will determine all things by the Scripture, as God commandeth you; which thing His Majesty exhorteth and desireth you."

If these were indeed the sentiments which Henry had commissioned Cromwell to utter before Convocation, they were admirably noble and wise, and indicated to the rival theologians what is in truth the only way whereby a godly and a perfect unity can ever be established in the Christian Church.

The Bishops rose up "to give thanks to the King's majesty for his fervent desire and study towards an unity, and for his virtuous exhortation;" and immediately proceeded to discuss the project thus submitted to them. It speedily became apparent that this venerable assembly, which was expected to devise some scheme for composing the fierce religious strife that embroiled England, was itself violently divided in opinion. Almost at the outset of the debate, the subject of the sacraments, their nature, their efficacy and their number, was as a matter of course intro-

duced; and immediately all hope of unity was dissipated. Stokesley, the great champion of the old party in the absence of Gardiner, who was on the Continent, maintained the orthodoxy of the current teaching on the nature and number of the sacraments; and, forgetting the King's injunction to appeal only to Scripture, he fortified his position by what he called "unwritten verities," and by copious citations from what Alesius, in his rough unceremonious way, styles "stinking glosses, and old lousy writers." Lee, Longland, and others supported Stokesley; Cranmer, Fox, and Latimer opposed him. The debate waxed fierce, and the disputants diverged widely from their point. Alesius himself, at the request of Cromwell, joined in the discussion, with the eager alacrity of one who was not only an ardent Reformer, but was also perfectly familiar with every feature of the controversy, and enjoyed a theological debate as only a Scotch Divine can do. It is unnecessary to add that no decision was arrived at, for Convocation were not agreed as to the ultimate standard by which the truth of their opinions was to be determined: and the debate on "a godly unity" ended, so far as Convocation was concerned, in fierce and angry warfare. To the general reader the report of the discussion would be dry and uninteresting: one noble speech, however, uttered by Fox, Bishop of Hereford, deserves to be placed on record for the admiration of all Englishmen.

"Think ye not," he said, addressing the prelates who sat around him, "that we can by any sophistical subtleties steal out of the world again the light which every man doth see. Christ hath so lightened the world at this time that the light of the Gospel hath put to flight all misty darkness, and it will shortly have the higher hand of all clouds, though we resist in vain never so much. *The lay people do now know the Holy Scriptures better than many of us.* And the Germans have made the text of the Bible so plain and easy

by the Hebrew and the Greek tongue, that now many things may be better understood without any glosses at all than by all the commentaries of the Doctors. And moreover they have so opened these controversies by their writings that women and children may wonder at the blindness and falsehood that hath been hitherto. . . . There is nothing so feeble and weak, so that it be true, but it shall find place and be able to stand against all falsehood. Truth is the daughter of time, and time is the mother of truth; and whatsoever is besieged of truth cannot long continue; and upon whose side truth doth stand that ought not to be thought transitory, or that it will ever fall. All things consist not in painted eloquence and strength or authority: for the truth is of so great power that it could neither be defended" [*i.e.* resisted] "with words, nor be overcome with any strength, but after she hath hidden herself long, at last she putteth up her head and appeareth, as it is written in Esdras, 'A King is strong, wine is stronger, yet women be more strong, but truth excelleth all.'"

Stokesley, however, was not to be driven from his position; "it was all a delusion," he said, "to believe that there was no other Word of God but that which every *sowter and cobler* read in their mother tongue"; there were many *unwritten verities*, mentioned by the old doctors of the Church, received from the Apostles, which, he maintained, were of equal authority with Scripture, and might be called "the Word of God unwritten."

The debate was adjourned, but was never concluded; for it was now all too manifest that the King's design had proved abortive, and that Convocation were not likely to produce any resolutions that might promote religious unity in England. Still Henry did not relinquish the work which he had undertaken. Modern statesmanship would have left the rival theologians to settle their differences by argument and debate, or would have taken refuge in universal toleration, and perfect freedom of creed and worship. But Henry conceived himself to be distinctly responsible as the religious guide of the people whom he

ruled; and Convocation having failed to discover any means of restoring "peace and unity," he himself undertook the task, and, to use his own words, felt himself "constrained to put his own pen to the book, and to conceive certain articles necessary to be set forth, read and taught for avoiding of all contention."[1]

The "Articles" thus referred to constituted the first authoritative exposition of the doctrines of the Church of England after it had thrown off the supremacy of the Papal See: and historians have not sufficiently observed that though they bore to have been "agreed upon by the bishops and the most discreet and best-learned men of the realm, after long and mature deliberation and disputation," they were yet in reality the production of Henry's own pen. The King had from his early years displayed a wonderful fondness for theological discussion; and Cromwell was scarcely using the language of courtly flattery when he declared in Convocation that Henry "by his excellent learning knew these controversies well enough." There is, therefore, nothing incredible in the assertion that Henry himself was really the author of the "Ten Articles," as his proclamation declares him to have been; and this fact materially assists us in understanding their peculiar theological teaching. They embody neither the opinions of Stokesley and his adherents, nor those of Cranmer and his party; still less, of course, do they reflect the views of bolder Reformers such as Alesius; they are not even to be regarded as a compromise in which the opposing parties agreed to meet as on neutral ground; they simply represent the theological beliefs of Henry at this precise moment of his reign, the beliefs, that is, of one, who found himself compelled to depart in some re-

[1] See Henry's letter in *Wilkins*, iii. 825.

spects from the old orthodoxy of his youth, but was reluctant to adopt any new opinions or practices. Such being the origin of the Articles, the reader will not expect to find in them any startling changes, or any very great progress in sound theology and purified worship. Stokesley and the theologians of the old school would indeed see in them many causes of offence. Alesius and the more ardent Reformers would regret many omissions. Even Latimer and Cranmer would be dissatisfied with them; yet, on the whole, the Articles may be viewed as approaching somewhat more nearly to their creed than to that of any other great religious party in the country; for they, like Henry, diverged slowly and reluctantly from the old formulæ and the old ritual to which they had been so long accustomed.

The Articles were *ten* in number, and were, briefly, as follows.[1]

I. *The Articles of our Faith:* all men should hold as true those things which are comprehended in the whole Canon of the Bible, and in the three Creeds.

II. *The Sacrament of Baptism:* this was instituted by Christ as a thing necessary for the attaining of everlasting life; infants, as well as adults, receive in it remission of sins and the favour of God; it is never to be repeated; the opinions of the Anabaptists are detestable heresies.

III. *The Sacrament of Penance:* this was also instituted by Christ, and is so necessary to salvation, that no man who sins after baptism, can be saved without it; auricular confession is to be considered expedient and necessary.

IV. *The Sacrament of the Altar:* transubstantiation was, of course, affirmed in the strongest terms.

V. *Justification:* here, it was acknowledged, that the mercy of God and the merits of Christ's passion were the only sufficient and

[1] *Cleopatra E.* v.: printed in Burnet iii. p. 198, etc., and frequently elsewhere.

worthy causes of our justification; yet, contrition, faith, and charity, on man's part must concur, and good works must follow.

VI. *Images:* these, it was said, had been used in Old Testament times, and tolerated in New, and might, therefore, still be retained in the Church to kindle and stir men's minds; but the rude people must be taught not to kneel or offer to them, but only to God.

VII. *Honouring of Saints:* saints, it was declared, ought to be honoured, but not with that honour due only to God, nor with the hope of obtaining from them that which God alone could bestow.

VIII. *Praying to Saints:* this was praised as a laudable custom; but, it was added, grace, remission of sin and salvation can only be obtained of God through the mediation of Christ.

IX. *Rites and Ceremonies:* all *laudable* customs, rites and ceremonies were to be retained, such as vestments, sprinkling of holy water, bearing candles on Candlemas Day, giving ashes on Ash Wednesday, carrying palms on Palm Sunday, creeping to the cross on Good Friday, etc. But withal, the people were to be taught, that none of these had any power to remit sin, but only to lift up the mind to God.

X. *Purgatory:* the practice of praying for souls departed was countenanced, it was asserted, by the Book of Maccabees and ancient Doctors; and might, therefore, it was maintained, be continued. All other questions, however, about the dead, where they were, or what they suffered, should be remitted to Almighty God: and all the abuses that had so long existed and had so mightily swelled the revenues of the Church, the belief that the Pope's pardons, and masses at *scala cœli* could deliver souls from purgatory, were to be utterly abolished."

Such was the first "Confession of Faith" of the Reformed Church of England: drawn up by the King, subscribed and sanctioned by Convocation, taught to the people by royal proclamation. One cannot but regret its meagreness, its sanction of several theological errors, its countenance of practices which had invariably been corrupted into superstitious abuses; still it was a considerable step in the right direction; and when we remember that it represented the opinions not of the most advanced Reformers, but of the most cautious and conservative, we may

admit that no contemptible progress had been already made in England in the reformation of religion. The creed was designed by Henry as an instrument to promote peace and religious unity among his subjects: probably the great majority of intelligent Englishmen welcomed it as not unfairly representing their own beliefs; certainly, only a small minority were as yet prepared to advance any farther. With all its defects, Latimer, we may be sure, welcomed it with the warmest gratitude; he affixed his signature to the Articles with unusual care, and his handwriting almost for the only time is plain and legible.[1]

It is not improbable that Cranmer and Latimer were consulted by Henry in the compilation of the Articles. Latimer's opinion seems to have been asked, for example, on the subject of purgatory, and though Henry did not choose to adopt his views on this important point, he condescended to discuss the question with him. Among the Cotton MSS. is preserved a curious letter containing Latimer's arguments against purgatory, with Henry's marginal animadversions in defence of the customary doctrine of the Church. Both are in the handwriting of the respective disputants. Latimer rests his belief on inevitable inferences from Holy Scripture, and on the teaching of the greatest of the Fathers—Jerome, Augustine, Cyprian and Chrysostom. He admits, indeed, that many of the Fathers had so expressed themselves as to lend a sanction to the belief in purgatory; but he claims for himself the right to differ from the Fathers, and protests against ascribing to them that authority which belonged only to Canonical Scripture. Whatever was uncertain as to the teaching of the Fathers, one thing, he maintained, was indisputably certain, that no such purgatory as had been preached for

[1] The original is among the Cotton MSS. *Cleopatra E.* v.

the last three hundred years could be established from their writings. Henry's replies are feeble and trifling, more like a scholastic quibbler than a King.[1] Latimer concludes with a characteristic argument of a practical kind: "The founding of monasteries argued purgatory to be" [for they were usually founded to provide for perpetual prayer for the departed in purgatory]; "so the putting of them down argueth it not to be. What uncharitableness and cruelness seemeth it to be to destroy monasteries, if purgatory be! Now it seemeth not convenient the Act of Parliament to preach one thing, and the pulpit another clean contrary." In other words, Latimer reminded Henry that to retain purgatory was to stultify the past legislation of his reign; but Henry was not convinced; he continued for years to believe, and to enforce upon others the belief, in purgatory; and his last will, written some years, however, before his death, provided that prayers should be said for the repose of his soul.

Latimer was exemplary in his attendance on his duties as a member of the House of Lords: what share he may have taken in the conduct of the business of the House cannot, of course, now be ascertained, the parliamentary eloquence of that day having perished and left no record: he was, however, regularly in his place, and was, indeed, only three times absent during the whole session.[2]

To the month of June of this year, shortly before the preaching of his famous sermon, may probably be referred a brief and obscure letter to Parker, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, the only letter to this Cambridge friend that has been preserved.

[1] The paper is printed in Strype, and in Latimer's *Remains*, p. 245, from *Cleopatra E.* v., but the date is uncertain.

[2] *Lords' Journals.*

"Mine own good Master Parker: *Salutem:* and as yet I have devised nothing, nor yet will, till I have spoken with the King's grace and have passed through the next Parliament, and then what I shall alter and change, found and confound, you shall not be ignorant thereof; *vale"* [farewell]. "And do as Master Latimer shall move you to do, *Ostende te-ipsum mundo. Delitescere diutius nolito; operare bonum dum tempus habes. Veniet nox quum nemo poterit operari. Notum est quid potes: fac non minus velis quam potes: Vale. Tuus* of *Worcester, H. Latymer."* (Show yourself to the world: do not remain longer hid: work while you have a suitable season. The night will come in which no man shall be able to work. What you can do is well known: do not be content to do less than you can do).[1]

The labours of Parliament and Convocation were finished by July 20; and we may take for granted that Latimer would immediately return to his diocese where his presence was urgently needed. For all England was swarming with idle ecclesiastics, thrown loose upon society by the suppression of the smaller monasteries, and wandering from place to place fanning into a flame such latent sparks of discontent as existed. It became, therefore, an important part of his work to protect his diocese from any mischief that might be excited by the teaching of such turbulent spirits. And as soon as he reached home he was required to watch the proceeding of some troublesome preacher who had apparently been attacking the Reformers with violence. The ever-watchful Cromwell had summoned that preacher to London to answer for himself; and Latimer sent up the sermon, with the following letter:—

"Right honourable Sir: *Salutem plurimam;* and because I hear your mastership hath sent for Master Coots, which preached at Hales, to come to you, therefore I do now send unto you his sermon, not as he spake it, if he spake it as his hearers do report it, but rather as he hath modified and tempered it, since he perceived that he should be examined of it. And yet, peradventure, you will not

[1] British Museum, Additional MSS. 19,400, No. 1 of the new arrangement.

judge it everywhere very well pondered. He seemeth to be very well studied in Master Moore's books" [*i.e.*, Sir Thomas More], "and to have framed him a conscience and a judgment somewhat according to the same. And to avoid all falsities, he appeareth to stick stiffly to *unwritten verities.* I would fain hear him tell who be those new fellows that would approve no sciences but grammar. *Qui vos audit, etc.; obedite præpositis, etc.; qui ecclesiam non audivit, etc.*" [*i.e.*, such verses as 'He who heareth you heareth me,' 'Obey them that are set over you,' 'He who does not hear the Church, let him be to you a heathen man']; "serve him gaily for traditions and laws to be made of" [by] "the clergy authoritatively; and to be then observed of the laity necessarily, as equal with God's word, as some say that he both thinketh and sayeth, etc." (as, indeed, Stokesley had said lately in Convocation).

"As far as I can learn of such as have communed with him he is wilily witted, Dunsly learned" [learned in Duns Scotus, scholastic theology], "Moorly affected, bold not a little, zealous more than enough: If you could monish him, charm him, and so reform him, etc., or else I pray you, inhibit him my diocese. You may send another, and appoint him his stipend, which God grant you do."[1]

With such spirits abroad in his diocese, Latimer's life during the summer of 1536 would be sufficiently anxious and uneasy. He would, moreover, be diligently occupied in seeing that the "Injunctions," issued by Cromwell as the "King's vicegerent in all jurisdiction ecclesiastical," were duly observed by his clergy. These injunctions, while they in the main enforced the "Articles" recently "devised and put forth by the King," contained also several admonitions to the clergy, which would be peculiarly acceptable to Latimer. The people were not to be encouraged to undertake pilgrimages; they were to be told that they would please God better by the true exercise of their bodily labour, providing for their families, than if they went on pilgrimage, and that it would be more pro-

[1] *Cleopatra E.* v. 393; printed also by Strype, but, as usual, not very accurately: the date is uncertain, but cannot be later than July, 1536.

fitable to their soul's health to bestow that on the poor which they were wont to bestow upon images. The clergy were to reside on their livings, to spend their time in reading Scriptures, and to show a good example. Fathers and masters were to teach their children and servants the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments in the mother-tongue; and the curates were to repeat them, clause by clause, in their sermons, till all were familiar with them. Moreover, all were to be brought up to work; no idleness was to be tolerated, lest there should afterwards be begging to the scandal of the nation.[1] In short, an admirably wholesome and practical reformation was everywhere to be introduced; and on the bishops and others in authority devolved the responsibility of seeing that the injunctions were honestly put into execution. There would be no lack, therefore, of interesting and important work to occupy Latimer's energy during the rest of this busy year.

But the year was not to pass away in these peaceful pastoral cares. The thunder-clouds that had so long been accumulating in the sky at length burst into open storm. On October 2, an insurrection, excited chiefly by resentment for the suppression of the religious houses, broke out at Louth, in Lincolnshire. Headed by one Melton, a shoemaker, better known by his soubriquet of Captain Cobbler, the insurgents addressed the sovereign in language of respectful complaint, protesting against the dissolution of the monasteries, the innovations in religion, and the elevation of men of low birth to the privy council. Henry replied to them in terms of the most contemptuous defiance. He was amazed, he said, at the presumption "of the rude commons of one shire, and that one the most

[1] Wilkins, iii.; *Chapter House Papers*, A. 1.

brute and beastly of the whole realm,"[1] in daring to find fault with the prince whom they were bound "to obey and serve with lives, lands, and goods." An army was, at the same time, sent under the Duke of Suffolk, who by employing temperate language, and making liberal promises, speedily quenched the rising flame: and, in a fortnight, most of the rebels quietly dispersed.[2] This, however, was but the prelude of the storm.

The same messenger that brought the tidings of the quelling of the Lincolnshire revolt, brought intelligence of a far more formidable rising in Yorkshire. The same causes had produced this second insurrection; but the leaders were men of higher social position, and of greater ability; and the rising at once assumed the dimensions of a great rebellion. The insurgents professed themselves the champions of the Church; several of the dispossessed priests marched at their head with crosses, and a sacred banner was borne before them emblazoned with the five wounds, the crucifix, and the chalice. The leader, Robert Aske, was equal to the greatness of the occasion; and from all quarters the disaffected flocked in crowds to join what was styled "The Pilgrimage of Grace." York and Hull were seized; and, with an army daily increasing in numbers, Aske directed his march towards London. At Court all was consternation and alarm, as great as when two hundred years later, the Young Chevalier marched to Derby. Cromwell was unwearied in raising funds: Henry was anxiously collecting troops. Thirty thousand rebels were in the field; and the royal armies did not muster one-third of this number. The house of Tudor was tottering

[1] Grafton's *Chronicle.*

[2] See especially Froude, vol. iii. for the best and most copious accounts of the risings in Lincoln and York.

on the throne ; and the hopes of the old Churchmen waxed strong and bright. The elements, however, or rather the God of the elements, favoured Henry's cause. The onward march of the insurgents was delayed by a sudden flood which rendered the Don impassable ; the Duke of Norfolk availed himself with admirable sagacity of every opportunity for interposing obstacles by suggesting negotiations and compromises : gradually the rebels dispersed ; the army of Aske melted away ; and in January, 1537, tranquillity was again restored.

Latimer was at Hartlebury when these disturbances broke out ; busied no doubt with his usual episcopal labours, yet keeping an eye on all suspicious persons, and watching every sign of the times in those perilous days. On October 19, ignorant apparently of the serious disturbances in the North, he sent to Cromwell a suspicious prophecy that was circulating in his diocese, in the hope that his lordship (Cromwell was now Lord Privy Seal), who "loved antiquities," would be able to "try the truth," and divine whether it threatened any danger to the State.[1] Cromwell was, of course, too busy to read the prophecy, an insane production of about one hundred and forty Latin Leonines, which Œdipus himself could not have construed ; but he believed, that in the crisis which had now occurred, and which threatened to annihilate all traces of the Reformation in England, some use might be made of Latimer's eloquence and popularity.

Latimer was accordingly summoned to London, that his voice might encourage and stimulate all loyal subjects in their devotion to the royal cause. On November 5 (a day which, however, had not yet become

[1] *Cleopatra E.* iv. : the prophecy is enclosed, but seems the production of a madman ; it will neither scan nor construe.

notable in English annals), Latimer preached at Paul's Cross against the Northern rebels. The Epistle for the day (the twenty-first Sunday after Trinity), "Put on the whole armour of God," seemed admirably suited for the occasion, and was naturally selected by Latimer as the theme of his discourse. The sermon, however, was by no means one of his most striking performances. He was somewhat out of his natural element; and he felt himself impeded by Cromwell's advice to be very discreet and cautious of giving offence to any that might be useful to Henry in the emergency. The customary energy and force of the preacher were therefore wanting; and though once or twice during the sermon it seemed as if the wonted fire would again break out as he drifted towards those great abuses which he had so often denounced, caution prevailed and repressed the impetuous current of that eloquence which used to rouse the enthusiasm of his hearers.[1] His sermon, as we learn from one of his letters, gave general satisfaction to all who heard it; a sure indication that it was of a different type from his ordinary sermons, which were wont to be received with fiercely opposite emotions rather than with a general consent of approbation.

Possibly on this occasion Latimer also paid a visit to Henry at Windsor: we may assume, however, that he was anxious to be at home again, and that as soon as his uncongenial task was over, he would return to his diocese, where so much still remained to be accomplished. He proposed to hold a general visitation; but this could not be put into execution till he had received the necessary "instructions" and sanction of Cromwell. As soon therefore as his Christmas festivity was ended, he again

[1] The sermon may be read in the Parker Society's Edition of Latimer's *Works*, p. 29, etc.

wrote to Cromwell for "further knowledge of his pleasure."

"According to your commandment, I was occupied at Paul's Cross upon Sunday next after your departure from London" [to consult with Henry at Windsor], "not otherwise, I trust, than according to your discreet monition and charitable advertisement, so moving to unity without any special note of any man's folly, that all my lords there present seemed to be content with me, as it appeared by the loving thanks that they gave. And now, Sir, I look for your letters of instructions and further knowledge of your pleasure as touching our visitations. Moreover I have bestowed the two benefices that Silvester Darius" [an Italian non-resident pluralist] "had, the one to Doctor Bagard, my chancellor, the other to Doctor Bradford, my chaplain;[1] for the King's grace charged me to bestow them well. But now, after that we have begun, we have a scruple how to proceed and end: if according to form hitherto used, it will not be done without great tract of time. The King's grace said no more to me but 'Give 'em, give 'em.' You know my chancellor's scrupulosity" [stickling for proceeding according to precedent]; "and I myself, though I am not altogether so scrupulous, yet I would it were done inculpably and duly. If we might know your advice herein, we should be very well ridded and eased. Finally, this bringer, my chaplain, would be a poor suitor to your lordship, in a poor man's cause. I know not well the matter; but if you would give him the hearing, etc. I am the bolder, because I think you are set up of God to hear and to help the little ones of God in their distress.[2]

"*Postridie Stephani Sancti*": (Dec. 27, 1536).

Bristol was the most important town in Latimer's diocese, and, as in other large towns, a considerable number of the inhabitants were zealous Reformers. We have already seen the fierce disturbances excited in that town by Latimer's preaching there in 1533; and at the close of 1536 the discord broke out afresh. During the progress of

[1] Bagard had been one of the Canons of Wolsey's College in Oxford: Bradford, a Cambridge man (not to be confounded with John Bradford, the martyr), was a zealous and distinguished Reformer, who had already suffered for circulating the New Testament.

[2] State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers, ubi supra.*

the rebellions in the North, some of the Bristol clergy who were opposed to the Reformation, had permitted their sympathies with the rebels to appear somewhat too plainly. They had neglected to speak against the Pope's usurped authority, as the law directed; and some of them, while the issue of the conflict was still doubtful, had even omitted to pray for the King. They had also embraced the opportunity of abusing their congregations for the readiness with which they had adopted "new-fangled heretic opinions;" and, with equal want of caution and of loyalty, had intimated their anticipation of a coming day of retribution, when the recent legislation of Parliament against the old ceremonies of the Church would be repealed. Such proceedings of course provoked a spirit of violent debate and retaliation; and, to allay the strife, Latimer went to Bristol in the beginning of 1537, and preached in several of the churches; but the disturbances still continued. Blasphemous parodies of the Lord's Prayer were posted on the doors of St. Mary Redcliffe. The priests from their pulpits violently denounced the people; and some of the parishioners responded with the rough logic of the fist, for "black-eyes" were complained of. Latimer came in for the chief share of the maledictions of the enemies of the Reformation. They considered him the great patron and fountain of all the heresy of the diocese. "The Bishop of Worcester," said one, "is a heretic, and it is a pity he has not been burned:" "I trust to bring a fagot," said an insubordinate priest, "and to see the Bishop of Worcester burned, and it is a pity that ever he was born."[1] It was again found necessary to issue a Royal Commission (May 7), to inquire into the cause of

[1] There is a large bundle of depositions before the Commissioners, which I have read among Cromwell's Papers, in the State Paper Office.

the disturbances, and peace was not restored till some of the most refractory were imprisoned. Possibly none of the other towns in Latimer's diocese were so much addicted to violent controversy as Bristol: yet this may be taken as a sample of the fierce agitation that marked the times; and with such a tide of religious strife raging around him, it will readily be imagined that Latimer's life was anything but a scene of placid enjoyment.

Neither Parliament nor Convocation assembled in 1537, but Latimer was not allowed to devote the summer to his long-contemplated visitation of his diocese. The *Articles of Religion* which had been issued some nine months before, had already been found unsatisfactory. They were hurriedly drawn up, as we saw, by Henry himself; and the experience of a few months' use brought many deficiencies to light. They were ambiguous, and an ingenious priest could easily interpret them in a sense widely different from that contemplated by Henry; and thus, instead of promoting union, they tended to increase and perpetuate division. They were much too meagre, moreover, to serve as a manual for the uninstructed: they needed commentary and elucidation, which the parish clergy were in many cases too ignorant to supply. Henry, therefore, summoned a Commission of the leading Divines to meet in London, and prepare a more copious work for the guidance of the nation. Latimer was of course one of these Commissioners; and the leaders of both parties were fairly represented: there was, however, no one to represent, as Alesius had done in the Convocation, the opinions of the more learned, and more advanced Reformers of the Continent. It was about the end of April when the Commission met in London, and their deliberations were not concluded till August. No record of the progress of their

debates has been preserved,[1] nor would it have been of much value if it had come down to us: the subjects discussed have been better treated by other disputants. On the Romish side, Stokesley was again the chief advocate; the Reformers trusting mainly to Hilsey, Fox, and Cranmer. Latimer, in truth, may rather be said to have been present at the deliberations than to have taken any active share in them. With his usual undue disregard of everything that was not plainly and immediately practical (as if erroneous beliefs could be long entertained without in a greater or less extent producing their effect on the lives of those who maintained them), he had never yet sufficiently studied the great doctrinal differences between the Church of Rome and the Reformed theologians; and the discussions seemed to him unnecessarily subtle and perplexing. He did not very well understand the debates: and he was so thoroughly sick of the interminable deliberations that he wished himself "poor parso n of poor Kington again." The discussions were certainly long-winded enough: for three months the Divines met and deliberated and debated, sometimes so fiercely that Fox regretted the absence of Cromwell, whose authority might have brought matters to a speedy termination. It was, moreover, a sultry, unhealthy season; the plague was raging with extraordinary violence in London, striking down the servants of the bishops in their residences; and Latimer, longing to commence the visitation of his diocese, fretted at the immoderate delay.

In the very middle of the deliberations, probably in the commencement of June, Latimer was instructed by the

[1] Papers, apparently prepared for discussing some of the points of difference, are preserved among the Cotton MSS., and partly printed in Strype, *Eccl. Mem.* ii. 340.

King and Council to go to the Tower and converse with some of the leaders in the "Pilgrimage of Grace," then lying under sentence of death. He had preached, it will be remembered, in the preceding November, against the Northern rebels; and this was possibly the reason why he was sent to confer with the leaders, to induce them to acknowledge their guilt and to reveal the secret sources of the conspiracy; at all events, we may be sure, the change of labour was agreeable to him, and he would feel more at home discussing the practical duty of obedience with the rebels, than attempting to follow the subtilties of patristic logic. He has himself left a brief summary of his "travail in the Tower." "There was," says he, "Sir Robert Constable, the Lord Hussey, the Lord Darcy; and the Lord Darcy was telling me of the faithful service that he had done the King's majesty. 'And' [if] 'I had seen my sovereign lord in the field,' said he, 'and I had seen His Grace come against us, I would have lighted from my horse, and taken my sword by the point, and yielded it into His Grace's hands.' 'Marry,' quoth I; 'but in the mean season ye played not the part of a faithful subject, in holding with the people in a commotion and disturbance."'[1]

It is not known how he succeeded with these rebel lords: but in the end of June, Lord Darcy was executed on Tower Hill as a traitor; and the other two suffered at Hull and Lincoln.

The summer passed on and still the debates had not reached their termination. The plague had driven both Henry and Cromwell from London, a circumstance not favourable to any speedy conclusion of the discussions: and in the absence of these higher authorities, the bishops were surrounded by crowds of supplicants anxious for

[1] Fourth sermon before Edward VI., *Sermons*, p. 163.

favours. Among others, some members of the University of Cambridge had naturally enough applied to Latimer for advice and assistance; and he, as naturally, had recourse to Cromwell, the Chancellor of the University. To this we owe a renewal of the correspondence with Cromwell, which, after so long a silence, is particularly acceptable to the biographer.

"Sir,—These two Fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge" [Nevell and another, who carried the letter], "do come to your lordship in the name of the whole College to the intent to show to your lordship the tenor of their statute as touching the election of a new Master: and I doubt not but with a word or two you may make Master, Day,[1] or any else eligible by their statute, as Mr. Nevell, yet Fellow of the same College, can commune with your lordship further, as shall please you; for they have great need of your lordship's charitable favour in many suits and traverses appertaining unto them not yet perfectly established. I trust also your lordship doth remember poor Clare Hall" [Latimer's old college, now, alas! suffering under a Master opposed to the Reformation], "that the Master" [John Crayford] "neither transgress the statute himself, nor yet bring into his room Mr. Swynbourne, of the same house" [who did come in, however], "a man, as they say, of perverse judgment, and too factious for such a cure. Mr. Nevell shall deliver to you a bill of the gravaments" [complaints] "of two or three of the Fellows, most given to good letters.

"I pray God preserve you, and send you hither shortly again, that we might end" [these tiresome debates], "and go home into our diocese, and do some good there. My lord of York hath done right well at Paul's Cross as touching the supremacy, and as touching condemnation of the rebels" [whom he was suspected of favouring]; "as well as he did before, if not better. Dr. Barnes" [our old Cambridge friend], "I hear say, preached in London this day a very good sermon, with great moderation and temperance of himself. I pray God continue with him, for then I know no one man shall do more good.

"I send you here a bullock" [diminutive Papal missive, playfully so nick-named], "which I did find amongst my bulls; that you may

[1] Day was made Master, July 27, 1537.

see how closely in time past the foreign prelates did practise about their prey. If a man had leisure to try out who was king in those days, and what matters were in hand, perchance a man might guess what manner a thing *illud secretum quod nosti*" [that private matter you know of] "was; such cloked conveyance they had.

"H. L. W.

"*Sub diem Swythineum.*"[1] (July 15, 1537).

At length, towards the end of July, the deliberations approached completion: the Divines, after sufficient discussion, had "subscribed the declarations;" the book was almost ready for publication; it only remained that it should be submitted to Cromwell and Henry, to receive their approbation and (if necessary) their corrections, that so it might be issued with the sanction of royal authority as the *Articles* had been. Unexpected difficulties, however, supervened; and, indeed, a mortification was in store for the Divines, which they little anticipated. Without the active assistance of Cromwell no further steps could be taken for the accomplishment of their work; and both Cranmer and Latimer wrote to solicit his aid. Latimer's letter is as follows:—

"This day, Sir, which is Saturday" [July 21, as appears from Cranmer's letter written the same day[2]], "we had finished, I trow, the rest of our book, if my lord of Hereford" [Fox] "had not been diseased, to whom surely we owe great thanks for his great diligence in all our proceedings. Upon Monday I think it will be done altogether, and then my lord of Canterbury will send it unto your lordship with all speed; to whom also" [*i.e.*, to Cranmer] "if anything be praiseworthy, *bona pars laudis optimo jure debetur*" [a large share of the praise is justly due]. "As for myself I can nothing else but pray God that when it is done it be well and sufficiently done,

[1] State Paper Office: one word, *supremacy*, is illegible, but is clearly the right word in the passage.

[2] "There remaineth," says Cranmer, "no more but certain notes of the Creed, unto which we be agreed to subscribe on Monday next." *Remains*, p. 338.

so that we shall not need to have any more such doings. For verily, for my part, I had lever" [rather] "be poor parson of poor Kington again, than to continue thus Bishop of Worcester; not for anything that I have had to do therein, or can do, but yet forsooth it is a troublous thing to agree upon a doctrine in things of such controversy, with judgments of such diversity, every man, I trust, meaning well, and yet not all meaning one way. But I doubt not but now in the end we shall agree both one with another, and all with the truth, though some will then marvel" [as they well might]. "And yet if there be anything either uncertain or unpure, I have good hope that the King's highness will *expurgare quicquid est veteris fermenti*" [purge out the old leaven]; "at least, may give it some note, that it may appear he perceiveth it, though he do tolerate it for a time, so giving place for a season to the frailty and gross capacity of his subjects.

"Sir, we be here not without all peril; for beside that two hath died of my keeper's folks out of my gate-house,[1] three be yet there with raw sores; and even now Master Nevell cometh and telleth me that my under-cook is fallen sick, and like to be of the plague. *Sed duodecim sunt horæ diei et termini vitæ sunt ab Eo constituti, qui non potest falli; neque verius est tamen, quod nascimur, quam quod sumus morituri*" [there are twelve hours of the day, and the limits of our life have been fixed by Him who cannot be mistaken; and it is not more true that we are born than that we shall die].

"As for Dr. King's matter" [some unknown attack against the royal prerogative, apparently], "I refer to your knowledge of justice, and to the use of your charity; but as touching *Defensor Fidei*" [Defender of the Faith], "I think that title due to the King. As for my lord of Hailes" [Whalley, Abbot of Hailes], "I fear he will be too cocket" [elated] "now with his great authority and promotion; his friends can jest upon such a bishop" [as Latimer][2] "that can with complaining promote, and would he should complain more. But I wot what I intended, let them jest at large.

"But now, Sir, this bringer, Thomas Gybson, is a poor suitor to

[1] "They die almost everywhere in London, Westminster, and in Lambeth they die at my gate, even in the next house to me." *Cranmer to Cromwell:* p. 338.

[2] The meaning can only be guessed at: it would seem that Latimer, in whose diocese Hailes lay, had complained of the abbot, but that his complaint had been disregarded, and the abbot's power and authority had been increased.

your lordship that he may by your favour have the printing of our book. He is an honest, poor man, and will set it forth in a good letter, and sell it good cheap; whereas others do sell too dear, which let many to buy. Dr. Crome and other my friends obtained of me, not without some importunity, to write unto you for him: but I wot not what to do, saving that I know that you wot both what is to be done and what may be done. I nothing else but commit him to your charitable goodness.

"Yours, HUGO WYGORN.

(July 21, 1537).[1] "More hastily than wisely."

The book, the fruit of so many deliberations, was, without loss of time, dispatched to Cromwell, and was by him submitted to Henry; but from some reason that has never been explained, it did not receive that formal royal sanction which the compilers desired, and indeed had almost a right to expect. It had been intended, apparently, that the book should contain, by way of preface, a letter from the Commissioners requesting the royal sanction of their work, followed by the King's reply acceding to their request, and stamping the book with royal authority. For some unexplained reason, however, Henry's reply did not appear in the book, which was consequently sent abroad simply with the recommendation of the Commissioners unsupported by the King, the Convocation, or the Parliament. As if to make the mystery more inexplicable, a minute of a reply by Henry is preserved in the State Paper Office,[2] in which, while regretting that he had not had time to do more than merely "as it were to taste their book," he yet expressed himself satisfied with the work, ordered it to be printed, and recommended that part of it should be read every Sunday and festival-day for the next three years, so that "the whole contents might be engraven on the hearts"

[1] State Paper Office: printed in the *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 563.
[2] *Chapter House Papers*, A. 1. 15.

of the people. Above every thing, the King exhorted them to be diligent in expounding the book, to avoid all "wrestling of the meaning," to have no more "thwartings or contentions," and, in short, "to utter to the people all that is God's Word purely and plainly." The letter is an admirable one, deserving of the highest praise; but, as has been said, it was not prefixed to the book, and the people, acute enough to observe this apparent want of royal sanction, styled the work "The Bishops' Book."

This "Bishops' Book," it need scarcely be added, is the work better known to the student of English literature as the *Pious and Godly Institution of a Christian Man.* It was intended, as we have seen, to supplement the deficiencies of the *Articles*, and consists mainly of copious expositions of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Sacraments. In its theology it does not differ materially from the *Articles;* like them, it admits many of the theoretical principles contended for by the Romanists, whilst it sedulously employs every precaution to guard the people from ignorant and superstitious abuses. In one point, indeed, the *Institution* seemed to concede more to the Romanists than the *Articles* had done: they had treated only of *three* sacraments, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and *Penance*, and had thus seemed to cast discredit on the other four so-called sacraments of the Romish theologians; whereas the *Institution* admitted all the seven sacraments of the Church of Rome, and carefully expounded their meaning. This, however, was the inevitable result of the still defective theology of the leading English Reformers; indeed, having in the *Articles* admitted Penance to be a sacrament, the same reasoning would render it logically impossible to reject the claims of the other so-called Romish sacraments. Although,

therefore, the *Institution* seemed more in accordance with the traditional Catholic theology than the *Articles*, this must not be construed as a success on the part of the Romanists. "It was plain," says a Roman Catholic historian,[1] "from the view of such forms of doctrine, that the interest of the old religion was every day declining." Some superficial observers, indeed, rejoiced in what they considered a victory for the old faith, and maintained that the "new book had restored all things to their old use:" and some modern writers, impatient at the slow progress made by the English Reformers in dogmatic theology, have echoed the same sentiment. To both, Cranmer's reply is unanswerable: "if men will indifferently" [impartially] "read these declarations, they shall well perceive, that purgatory, pilgrimages, praying to saints, images, holy bread, holy water, holy days, merits, works, ceremony, and such other, be not restored to their late accustomed abuses; but shall evidently perceive that *the Word of God hath gotten the upper hand of them all*, and hath set them in their right use and estimation."[2] The supremacy of Holy Scripture was the really fundamental point; and that once established, it might be hoped that every thing else would follow in due time.

It must not be imagined for a moment, that in signing the belief in transubstantiation (which was the doctrine of the *Institution*), Cranmer, Latimer, and the other Reforming Commissioners, were doing violence to their own convictions. Even Protestant historians have not always been sufficiently careful to observe the exact order of events, and to mark the progress of the English Reformers in their doctrinal opinions. Latimer and Cranmer, in 1537,

[1] Dodd, *Church History*, p. 122.
[2] Cranmer's Letters; *Remains*, p. 351.

believed in transubstantiation as firmly as Gardiner or Stokesley; and it was not for some years that either of them abandoned this erroneous belief. In Latimer's case, there had probably never yet been any sufficiently serious consideration of the grounds on which the more advanced Reformers rejected the monstrous Romish dogma. Cranmer, however, had carefully studied the question, he had read all that had been written by Zwingle and Oecolampadius, and was still of opinion that the doctrine of the real presence as taught in the Romish Church was supported "by evident and manifest passages of Scripture, and commended with clearness and diligence by the earliest ecclesiastical writers," was, in fact, "founded upon a solid rock,"[1] which no argument could shake. By-and-by, we shall find both Cranmer and Latimer, on closer study of Holy Scripture, reject the doctrine as equally opposed to Scripture and to common sense.

Apart from this countenance given to the Romish doctrines of the Sacraments, and its manifest reluctance to abolish any ceremony that had ever been practised in the Church (if only it could possibly be purged from superstitious abuses), the *Institution* is a truly admirable book, "a right godly book of religion," as a contemporary styled it, excellently adapted to instruct the people in the service of God and the practical duties of life. Many pious and learned Divines of the highest eminence have freely acknowledged its merits; and by general consent it is admitted to have well fulfilled the high promise of its title, and to have been in truth "a godly and pious institution of a Christian man."

One other merit, of no slight value in a manual intended

[1] See his very interesting letter to Vadian, written in 1537. *Zurich Letters*, p. 13, etc.

to be repeatedly read in public assembly, it incontestibly possessed the merit of a grand and solemn majesty of style suited to the greatness of the subject. Froude has justly remarked that "in point of language, the *Institution* is beyond all question the most beautiful composition that had as yet appeared in English prose." Its sentences move with that grave, melodious, rhythmic march so impressive on the ear, and which reaches its perfection in the Book of Common Prayer and the Ecclesiastical Polity. It is to Cranmer, in all probability, that this feature in the *Institution* is due, and when posterity learns to appreciate more fairly than at present what it owes to the patient, peace-loving primate, it will honour him as one of the great fathers of English prose.

In the mean time, July had gone, August was begun, the King's consent and sanction had not yet been obtained for the *Institution;* and Latimer, sick of the delay, was anxious to return to his diocese and proceed with the long-meditated visitation for which Cromwell had granted the necessary letters. Probably he had never been so disgusted with London before, yet it was at this crisis of vexation and disappointment, that he was cheered by what is perhaps the brightest occurrence in Henry's reign, an occurrence so unexpected that we cannot but trace in it the finger of God directing the policy of the earthly monarch.

The reader has not forgotten the burning of the Bibles at Paul's Cross, the vehement denunciations of Tyndale's New Testament, and the diligent search for all copies of the prohibited book. The laws against reading or possessing an English New Testament had never yet been repealed; although, since the downfall of the Papal Supremacy, they had been almost inoperative. Still, the Bible could not be openly printed or circulated in the

English language; the "better translation" promised by the Bishops was not even begun, and was never likely to be finished; and Cranmer and Latimer longed in vain for some English Bible which might be freely read by all English people. Judge, therefore, of Cranmer's surprise and joy when Richard Grafton, a member of the Grocers' Company, waited on him with a "new translation of the Bible in new print," submitting it to his judgment, in hope that if he approved it he would procure the King's consent to have it "sold or read of every person, without danger of any act, proclamation, or ordinance heretofore granted to the contrary." The Archbishop read it with pleasure, liked it "better than any other translation heretofore made," and sent it to Cromwell, entreating him to do what he could to obtain Henry's licence. Was it likely that Henry would consent to this unexpected request? Henry *did* consent immediately, with perfect cordiality. Cranmer had sent the Bible to Cromwell on August 4; on the 13th of the same month, he wrote again, to thank the Secretary for the great boon which had thus been procured for the English nation. Latimer had also seen the Bible, with what pleasure we may imagine! and he, too, was all gratitude to Henry and Cromwell. Cranmer could not sufficiently express his joy; and we, who know what England owes to its English Bible, will not think his language exaggerated, when he thus writes to Cromwell:—"These shall be to give you the most hearty thanks that any heart can think, and that in the name of all them which favoureth God's Word, for your diligence at this time in procuring the King's highness to set forth God's Word and His Gospel by His Grace's authority. For the which act, not only the King's majesty, but also you shall have a perpetual laud and memory of all them that be now, or hereafter shall be, God's faithful

people and the favourers of His Word. And this deed you shall hear at the great day, when all things shall be opened and made manifest."[1]

"The King's heart," said the wise man of old, "is in the hand of the Lord, and He turneth it whithersoever He will." How was it to be explained that Henry, after withholding his sanction from the book compiled by his own Commissioners, should without a moment's delay give his free consent to the open circulation of the English Bible which had been so frequently prohibited, and that in the version of Tyndale, whom he had persecuted to the death? The last words of the martyr, as he perished at the stake in Vilvorde, had been, "Lord, open the eyes of the King of England;" and who could fail to recognise in Henry's act the best answer to Tyndale's prayer?[2]

Thus unexpectedly refreshed and cheered after the uncongenial labours of the summer, Latimer returned to his diocese in the end of August. The visitation was at last to be begun; and he had, in consultation with Cranmer, determined upon the injunctions to be issued to the clergy. These injunctions we shall presently consider, and shall follow the Bishop in his visitation; but first of all let us read his letter to Cromwell on some matters of less importance; the bearer of the letter being one of that family of Lucy of Charlcote, known to all the world from its contact with Shakspere.

"Sir,—As touching all matters in the petitions of this Master Lucy, he himself shall be my letters unto your good lordship. Only I desire you so to use him, as far as may stand with right, that his goodwill toward all goodness may be encouraged by communing with you, and promoted by hearing of you. There be too few such

[1] Cranmer's *Remains*, p. 346.

[2] The reader will find the best account of the whole transaction in Anderson's *Annals of the English Bible*. Vol. i. pp. 580, etc.

gentlemen in the King's realm. And he can open to you all together, as to the priest of Hampton's judgment" [Hampton-upon-Avon, probably, beside Charlcote], "what proceedings it had. I would wish better judgments to be in some of the King's judges, and more *prepense* favour towards reformation of things amiss in religion. There be many judgments, and yet few or none be brought to the Ordinary's knowledge, after due form of the King's acts.

"But now sir, as for my brother prior's matter,[1] my lord of Hereford's and mine, and Clare Hall's matter [it] dependeth only of your opportune and behoovable remembrance. As for St. John's College, I can say no more but that all factions and affections be not yet exiled out of Cambridge: and yet, my good lord, extend your goodness thereunto, forasmuch as you be their High-Chancellor, that in your time they be not trodden under foot. As for Master Ponnes" [unknown person], "sir, I assure you I am not so light of credence as he pretendeth me to be, as I can affirm unto you with certain and sure arguments, as you shall hereafter know all together *ab origine*" [from the beginning].

"Postridie Laurentii at Hartlebury."[2]

[September 6, 1537].

A visitation in times of change and reformation was, of course, very different from the peaceful and formal visitation of our days. It implied a personal inspection of the diocese, and a personal inquiry into the lives and doctrines of the clergy; abuses had to be removed, wrongs had to be righted, the law had to be explained, and provision made for the proper instruction of the people. The country, in general, was sunk in lamentable ignorance, and the grossest irregularities existed in the services of the Church; and the diocese of Worcester, so long deprived of the energy of a resident bishop, was probably peculiarly fertile in abuses and corruptions. The state of the diocese, and the religious wants of the country at the time, may best be read in

[1] In the *Chapter House Papers*, C. 4. 1. are many letters from the Prior of Worcester (Holbeach) to Cromwell.

[2] State Paper Office; printed not quite accurately in Latimer's *Remains*, p. 381.

Latimer's Injunctions; for as there is no law against unknown vices, so neither would a Bishop's attention be directed against imaginary faults on the part of the clergy. The following are the Injunctions, copied from his Register :—[1]

"Hugh, by the goodness of God bishop of Worcester, wisheth to all his brethren curates grace, mercy, peace, and true knowledge of God's Word, from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Forasmuch as in this my visitation I evidently perceive that the ignorance and negligence of divers curates in this deanery" [the injunctions were repeated in each deanery,] "to be intolerable and not to be suffered, for that thereby doth reign idolatry and many kinds of superstitions, and other enormities; and considering withal that our sovereign lord the King, for some part of remedy of the same, hath granted by his most gracious licence that the Scripture of God may be read in English of all his obedient subjects: I, therefore, willing your reformation in most favourable manner, to your least displeasure, do heartily require you all and every one of you, and also in God's behalf command the same, according as your duty is to obey me as God's minister, and the King's, in all my lawful and honest commandments, that you observe and keep inviolably all these Injunctions following, under pain of the law :—

"First. Forasmuch as I perceive that ye neither have observed the King's Injunctions" [issued by Cromwell as King's ecclesiastical vicegerent in 1536] "nor yet have them with you as willing to observe them: therefore ye shall from henceforth both have and observe diligently and faithfully, as well special commandments of preachings, as other Injunctions given in his grace's visitation.

"*Item.* That ye, and every one of you, provide to have of your own a whole Bible, if ye can conveniently, or at the least a New Testament, both in Latin and English, before the feast of the nativity of our Lord next ensuing.

"*Item.* That ye, and every one of you, do read over and study every day one chapter at the least, conferring the Latin and the English together, proceeding from the chapter from the beginning of the book to the end, having no necessary let" [hindrance] "to the contrary.

"*Item.* That you, and every one of you provide to have of your

[1] They are almost the same as those issued in the diocese of Hereford (Fox being unable to visit), by Archbishop Cranmer. Doubtless Latimer and Cranmer had drawn them up after much common consultation.

own a book called *The Institution of a Christian Man*, lately set out of the King's grace's prelates by his grace's commandment.

"*Item.* That in secret confession and making of testaments you excite and stir your parishioners from will-works to the necessary works of God, works of mercy and charity.

"*Item.* That ye, and every one of you, do at all times the best that you can to occasion your parishioners to peace, love and charity, so that none of ye suffer the sun to set upon their wrath.

"*Item.* That ye, and every one of you, provide to have a copy of these mine injunctions within thirteen days at the uttermost.

"*Item.* That you, and every one of you, shall from henceforth suffer no religious persons, friar, or other, to have any services in your churches, either trental,[1] quarter-service, or other.

"*Item.* That preaching be not set aside for any manner of observance in the church, as procession, and other ceremonies.

"*Item.* That ye, and every one of you, do not admit any young man or woman to receive the sacrament of the altar, until that he or she openly in the church, after mass or evensong, upon the holiday, do recite in English the *Pater*.

"*Item.* That ye, and every one of you, from henceforth bid beads,[2] no otherwise than according to the King's grace's ordinance, lest long bead-telling let" [hinder] "fruitful preaching of God's Word.

"*Item.* That ye, and every one of you, as often as there is any marriage within your parish, exhort and charge your parishioners openly in the pulpit, amongst other things in your sermons, that they neither make nor suffer to be made any privy contract of matrimony, as they will avoid the extreme pain of the law certainly to be executed upon them.

"*Item.* That ye, and every one of you, that be chantry priests, do instruct and teach the children of your parish, such as will come to you, at the least, to read English, so that thereby they may the better learn how to believe, how to pray, and how to live to God's pleasure.

"*Item.* That no parson, vicar, curate, nor chantry priest, from henceforth do discourage any lay person from the reading of any good books either in Latin or English, but rather animate and encourage them unto such things.

[1] *Trentals* were groups of *thirty* masses, said three on each of ten festivals: sometimes called *tricennals*.

[2] The bidding of beads had been regulated by ordinance in 1534, which specified for whom prayers were to be made and in what order; the ordinance is printed in Cranmer's *Remains*, pp. 460, etc.

"*Item.* That ye, and every one of you, not only in preaching and open communication, but also in secret, say the *Pater Noster*, the *Creed* and the *Ten Commandments*.

"*Item.* That in praise time" [? plague time] "no body be brought into the church, but be brought into the church-yard, that the peril of infection thereby may the better be avoided.

"*Item.* That no curate command the even to be fasted of an abrogate holiday" [abrogated by royal proclamation of last year].[1]

It is a strange, to us almost an incomprehensible state of religion, of which we get a glimpse through the aid of these Injunctions. Clergy who had no Bibles, not even a New Testament; sermons curtailed by long prayers for the dead, or omitted altogether to give place to some religious procession; communicants who could not even say the Lord's Prayer in English: surely here was a country that sadly needed reformation, and that promised no lack of work to a diligent reforming bishop. Some of the particular grievances of this visitation we shall read in Latimer's letters to Cromwell; but its general character must be left to our own imagination. With what unpleasant looks of ill-dissembled hatred the Bristol clergy would listen to the Injunctions of the Diocesan whom they had so fiercely opposed a few years ago; how, in many parishes, complaints loud and deep would be brought by the people against priests who never preached, and whose lives were scandalous; how priests, anxious to do their duties, were thwarted by superstitious parishioners and patrons with seditious tendencies; all this, which must have sorely taxed the strength and patience of Latimer, must be filled up by conjecture. Take, for example, the following sketch of what occurred in a visitation, as a specimen of part of Latimer's labour during September and October.

[1] Abingdon, *Antiquities of Worcester Cathedral.*

"I heard of a bishop of England that went on visitation,"—it is Latimer himself that tells the story in one of his sermons before Edward VI.—"and as it was the custom, when the bishop should come, to be rung into the town, the great bell's clapper was fallen down, the tyall was broken, so that the bishop could not be rung into the town. There was a great matter made of this, and the chief of the parish were much blamed for it in the visitation. The bishop was somewhat quick with them, and signified that he was much offended. They made their answers, and excused themselves as well as they could: 'It was a chance,' said they, 'that the clapper brake, and we could not get it mended by and by; we must tarry till we can have it done: it shall be amended as shortly as may be.' Among the other, there was one wiser than the rest, and he comes me to the bishop: 'Why, my lord,' saith he, 'doth your lordship make so great a matter of the bell that lacketh his clapper? Here is a bell,' said he, and pointed to the pulpit, 'that hath lacked a clapper this twenty years. We have a parson that fetcheth out of this benefice fifty pound,' [equal to £750] 'every year, but we never see him.'"[1]

Truly might Latimer speak of the negligence of the clergy as intolerable.

Or, by way of illustrating the injunction that sermons should not be set aside for processions or idle ceremonies, let the reader consider the following incident that occurred to Latimer himself during the period of his episcopate:—

"I came once myself," he says, "to a place, riding on a journey homeward from London, and I sent word over night into the town that I would preach there in the morning, because it was holiday" [St. Philip and St. James's Day]; "and methought it was an holiday's work. The church stood in my way, and I took my horse and my company, and went thither; I thought I should have found a great company in the church, and when I came there, the church-door was fast locked. I tarried there half-an-hour and more: at last the key was found, and one of the parish comes to me and says, 'Sir, this is a busy day with us, we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hood's day'" [May 1]. "'The parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin

[1] *Sermons*, p. 207.

Hood: I pray you let them not.' I was fain there to give place to Robin Hood: I thought my rochet should have been regarded. though I were not; but it would not serve, it was fain to give place to Robin Hood's men. It is no laughing matter my friends, it is weeping matter, a heavy matter, a heavy matter, under the pretence for gathering for Robin Hood, a traitor and a thief, to put out a preacher, to have his office less esteemed, to prefer Robin Hood before the ministration of God's Word: and all this hath come of unpreaching prelates."[1]

The greater religious houses were still in existence throughout the diocese of Worcester; but were, as usual, exempt from the jurisdiction of the Bishop. Latimer, however, seems to have received authority to visit the great Abbey of St. Mary in his cathedral city; and he issued to the Prior and the convent, injunctions similar to those which we have already seen issued for the use of the diocese at large; some special articles being added to direct the proceedings of the monastery in their worship and at their daily meals.

Of the special incidents of the visitation, and the nature of the complaints which came before him for redress, we have slight specimens in the two following letters addressed to Cromwell during its progress.

"My singular good lord, I doubt nothing but that your good lordship will extend your goodness to that poor priest, Sir Large,[2] in my conscience injured and wronged by means of one Mr. Clopton" [a squire near Stratford-on-Avon], "which neither did hear him, nor, if he had, could judge his doctrine; but zealously, for lack of right judgment, stirred the people against him, as Master Nevell can tell you, whom I do make my letters to you at this time. And thus I commit good Master Lucy to your goodness, and his whole cause.

"6 October. "Yours, H. Latimer Wigorn.

"At Pershore in his visitation."[3]

[1] Latimer's *Sixth Sermon before King Edward.*

[2] Priests, it may be noted, were usually called "*Sir.*"

[3] State Paper Office.

The ill-used priest received redress, as appears from the next letter written eight days later from Warwick.

"Sir, as touching your request concerning your friend, Master Barker" [that he might be made warden of the church of Stratford-on-Avon] [it], "shall be accomplished and done; it shall not stick on my behalf. He seemeth a man, as your lordship doth say, of honest conversation, and also not without good letters. Let them both" [the actual warden and his would-be successor] "commence and conclude; I shall confer the resignation once (it is) exhibited unto me, according to your desire. Only I require two things upon your good lordship: the one, that the poor college" [collegiate church of Stratford] "be not bounden for the pension, and to that Master Barker himself is agreeable, for I telled him plainly my mind therein, for it may right well chance that Mr. Doctor Bell" [the actual warden, and Latimer's successor as Bishop of Worcester] "do outlive Mr. Barker, and then the succeeder should come into a warm office, to be charged not alonely with *(first)* fruits and tenths, but also with pension. The other, that your lordship would persuade Master Barker to tarry upon it, keep house in it, preach at it, and about it, to the reformation of that blind end of my diocese. For else what are we the better for either his great literature or good conversation, if my diocese shall not taste and have experience thereof. And the houses" [of the clergy of the church in Stratford], "I trow, be toward ruin and decay, and the whole town far out of frame for lack of residence. When the head is far off, the body is the worse. Thus I commit altogether to your customable gentleness and charitable goodness, which is not wont to regard more the wealthy and pleasant living of one body, than the necessary relief of many souls.

"As to Sir Large, your commandment shall be done, whose cause, in my mind, your lordship doth judge rightly: malice to be in one part" [viz. Squire Clopton], "and simplicity in the other. But God shall reward you, that will not suffer malice to prevail. *Postridie Edwardi*" [day after Edward's Day] "at Warwick, visiting and busily alway."[1]

Cromwell, we fear, was too busy to pay much heed to

[1] State Paper Office: Latimer had at first concluded with the words "written at Hartlebury," which he afterwards erased.

this letter from Latimer; for on October 12, two days before it was written, the son so long hoped-for was at last born to Henry. The auspicious event occurred at Hampton Court, and filled the hearts of all loyal subjects with the greatest joy. Some modern historians, indeed, have ridiculed as extravagant, the expression of extreme pleasure with which the birth of Edward was received: but a very little attention to the peculiar circumstances of the country at the time will enable us to understand, and to approve the enthusiasm of the people. Henry had now reigned for eight-and-twenty years, his health was beginning to give way, and there was no heir to the throne. Elizabeth and Mary had been pronounced illegitimate by Parliament, and the succession of either at that time would have been the signal for a civil war. The progress of the Reformation had hitherto been owing in great measure to Henry; and the Reformers were naturally anxious for the birth of an heir who should be brought up in their principles, and might be expected to continue the work which his father had begun. The Romish party, on the other hand, at least the more ignorant amongst them, were confirmed in their secret belief of Henry's wickedness in casting off his allegiance to the Pope by this visible curse of want of male heirs which seemed to have descended from heaven upon his guilty head. The succession was insecure; the continuance of domestic peace depended upon a single life; civil war, embittered by religious animosity, was inevitable if Henry should meet with any accident. The prospect, therefore, was sufficiently gloomy. All was changed by the birth of Edward. There was now an heir of unquestionable legitimacy, and the blessings of an undisputed succession and a stable government were secured to a nation which had not yet forgotten the horrors of a

thirty years' civil war. That in such circumstances they should have welcomed the young prince with a joy that surpassed all bounds was only natural and appropriate: his birth was an inestimable blessing to the country, and Latimer's letter of congratulation, which has been ridiculed for its over-charged extravagance, expresses no more than was felt by all honest, pious Englishmen.

"Right Honourable, *salutem in Christo Jesu.* And, Sir, here is no less joying and rejoicing in these parts for the birth of our Prince, whom we hungered so long, than there was, I trow, *inter vicinos*" [among the neighbours], "at the birth of St. John Baptist; as this bearer, Master Evans, can tell you. God give us all grace to yield due thanks to our Lord God, God of England! for verily He hath showed Himself God of England, or rather an English God, if we consider and ponder well all His proceedings with us from time to time. He hath overcome all our illness with His exceeding goodness; so that we are now more than" [ever?] "compelled to serve Him, seek His glory, promote His Word, if the devil of all devils be not in us. We have now the stop of vain trusts, and the stay of vain expectations; let us all pray for his preservation; and I for my part will wish that His Grace always have, and even now from the beginning, governors, instructors, and officers, of right judgments, *ne optimum ingenium non optimâ educatione depravetur*" [that an excellent natural disposition be not spoiled by bad training]. "But what a great fool am I" [to be thinking of the education of an infant seven days' old]: "so, what devotion showeth many times but little discretion. And thus the God of England be ever with you in all your proceedings!

"The 19th of October, now at Hartlebury.

"If you would excite this bearer" [Master Evans, one of the ecclesiastical commissioners] "to be more hearty against the abuse of imagery" [images], "and more forward to promote the verity, it might do good; not that it came of me, but of yourself, etc."[1]

Latimer, it will be seen, from this letter, had returned again to Hartlebury, his visitation being perhaps con-

[1] State Paper Office: printed in *State Papers* i. 571.

cluded, and, as we learn from himself, his feeble frame being exhausted by his labours. He was not, however, allowed any long repose. Jane Seymour, the best beloved of all Henry's queens, had only survived the birth of her son twelve days. She died on October 24, and on the 8th, or some say the 12th of November following, her body was conveyed "with great solemnity from Hampton Court to Windsor, and there buried in the midst of the quire."[1] "At the same time," says the chronicler, "was made in Paul's a solemn herse for her, where was a mass and dirige; and in like manner was sung a mass and dirige in every parish church in London."[2] It was probably in connection with these funeral solemnities that Latimer, fatigued and in ill-health, was summoned to London. At all events he was in London at the commencement of November, and was appointed to preach on the 13th, the day following the Queen's funeral; and it seems highly improbable that anything of less importance would have induced him to leave Hartlebury, especially when his health was so precarious. Of course he had also business to transact with Cromwell; and his letter to the all-important Lord Privy Seal throws an interesting light upon his movements at the time.

"Right Honourable,—When I was with your lordship last" [some months ago], "you were desirous to know where you might have good monks. I told you of two with my lord" [abbot] "of Westminster; I could not then name them to you, but now I can: the one is called Gorton, the other Clarke; both bachelors of divinity, well learned, of right judgment, of very honest name. The Prior of Coventry, as I hear say, is dead. The matter" [of appointing a successor] "is somewhat entered with the King's grace, and like to go forward, if

[1] Stowe: Grafton and Hall say she was buried on the 8th; Stowe delays the funeral till the 12th.

[2] Grafton.

you put thereto your helping hand. I doubt not but my brother Abbot of Westminster, as ill as he might spare them, yet will forego them for such a purpose; but much the rather if he perceive your pleasure therein.

"I would have waited upon your lordship myself, as my duty had been; but surely, Sir, I do what I can to enable myself to stand in the pulpit on Tuesday" [to preach a funeral sermon on Queen Jane]. "I am in a faint weariness over all my body, but chiefly in the small of my back; but I have a good nurse, good Mistress Statham, which, seeing what case I was in, hath fetched me home to her own house, and doth pymper me up with all diligence: for I fear a consumption. But it maketh little matter for me. I pray God preserve your lordship long in health to all such good purposes as God hath ordained you to! In Master Statham's house. 8th of November" [1537].[1]

The good Mistress Statham who thus so kindly tended Latimer in his illness, was of course an admiring follower, who had often heard him preach in London. She resided in "Milk Street in the Parish of St. Mary Magdalen,"[2] and was well-known to Cranmer as well as to Latimer. Her kindness was not forgotten by the two prelates, who recommended her to the patronage of Cromwell; nor was it forgotten by the Romish party when they came into power, for her name appears among those who were brought into trouble in the reign of Mary.

Before leaving London on this occasion, Latimer probably paid a last farewell visit to his old friend Humphrey Monmouth, alderman and draper, who had long favoured the doctrines of the Reformers, and had even been imprisoned for assisting Tyndale. The worthy alderman was drawing near his end, and while Latimer was in London, on November 16, he made his last will and testament, bequeathing among other legacies £20 for thirty sermons, to

[1] Cotton MSS., *Cleopatra* E. iv. 139.
[2] Foxe, vol. v. p. 444. Cranmer's *Remains*, p. 575.

be preached in his parish church of All-Hallows Barking, by the four great Reforming preachers of the day, Latimer, Crome, Barnes, and Taylor (rector of St. Peter's, Cornhill).[1] This appointment of Latimer to preach was not a mere tribute of private friendship; Latimer had become the recognised exponent of the views of the great majority of the English Reformers. His sermons had awakened a response from many hearts; the straightforward practical character of his oratory being exactly that which was best adapted to impress the national mind. The student who prosecutes his researches into the history of the period among the manuscripts of the British Museum or the State Paper Office, meets everywhere proofs of the wide extent to which Latimer influenced public opinion. His name was in everyone's mouth; and his doctrines were everywhere the theme of discussion. Thus, for example, a countryman brought before the justices on the charge of neglecting some ecclesiastical ordinance, maintained that he had heard "Latimer and Crome preach that we should trust only in God's Word, and that we should not honour any saints, nor trust in any ceremonies of the church;" he had been told also "that Doctor Barnes is likewise of the same mind."[2] The Vicar of Croydon, having been examined before Cranmer upon certain opinions which he had preached, was asked among other questions "whom he knoweth that doth exclude all bodily observance as frivol and vain, all ceremonies of religion, and all vocal prayer, calling it lip-labour." He answered, "The Bishop of Worcester and Dr. Crome have so done, for it followeth of their words."[3] The vicar was unduly straining Lati-

[1] The will is in Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, vol. i. part ii.
[2] Cotton MSS., *Cleopatra* E. v. 398.
[3] Cranmer's *Remains*, p. 339, from the State Paper Office.

mer's words in drawing such an inference from them; but at all events they had clearly made a deep impression on his mind. Such intimations as these might be indefinitely multiplied; they occur in the most unexpected places, and prove that his teaching had sunk deep into the heart of the nation.[1]

Barnes, we have seen, was nominated along with Latimer as one of the preachers appointed in Monmouth's will; and he also was one of those whose influence was most widely felt in forming public opinion. His exile in Germany, and his intercourse with the German Reformers, had made him well acquainted with the theology of the Continental Protestants, and had apparently somewhat sobered down his former rashness. Latimer had always entertained a high opinion of the ability of Barnes, and on his return to Hartlebury, after this hurried visit to London, he took Barnes with him, that his energy and eloquence might assist in reforming some of "the blind ends of his diocese." Barnes remained with Latimer a few weeks, preaching with singular power; for in "handling a piece of Scripture and in setting forth of Christ" he had no equal; so at least Latimer thought, and he longed that Henry might be persuaded to hear him. The Christmas of 1537 Barnes spent with Latimer at Hartlebury, in the festive hospitality of that ancient episcopal abode; and we may be sure that there were not wanting many reminiscences of that stormy Christmas of twelve years before, when Barnes's inflammatory discourse had excited such a commotion in Cambridge. Times had changed much for the better since that exposition in the University. The Cardinal was gone, and the Pope's authority was gone; men were no longer liable to

[1] There are many such proofs of Latimer's influence in the *Chapter House Papers* in the State Paper Office.

be burned for reading the Scriptures in English; and Latimer, then known only as a suspected heretic whom all men avoided, was now sitting at ease in his palace, high in office in the Church, high in favour with the Sovereign. The Reformation might seem to move slowly to one who marked its progress day by day: but one who compared the ecclesiastical position of periods twelve years apart, would be startled with the greatness of the changes that had been effected in so brief a space.

Latimer's correspondence with Cromwell still continues to throw a light upon his proceedings, and is therefore welcome to all readers. Almost immediately on his return to Hartlebury, as we conjecture, he wrote the following:—

"Sir,— I am so malapert, seeing that your goodness towards me maketh me bold, I should have remembered your lordship of Gorton and Clarke, the two monks of Westminster, as concerning Coventry" [the vacant priorship of the monastery there], "but I had forgotten it; and nevertheless I trust it needeth not.

"As for Master Haynes" [President of Queen's College], "he thinketh to keep the Wednesday himself" [probably the preaching on Wednesday in the coming Lent], "so that I shall not need to advertise my brother prior of that" [Holbeach, Prior of Worcester]; "but I would be glad that he had a Sunday, to the intent that the King's grace might taste what he can do, if it were so seen to your good lordship; and then I would know what Sunday.

"This bearer, Master Acton" [of Sutton, in Worcestershire, married to the daughter of Humphrey Monmouth's brother], "my godsib[1] and friend, hath something to say to your lordship. He is faithful and hearty in all good causes, no man more ready to serve God and the King, and your lordship's hearty lover to his power. I commit both him and his cause to your accustomable goodness, and you and yours to God's goodness.

"There is one Anthony Throgmorton, servant as they say, to Master Pole, cardinal; if he be the King's true subject" [which he was not, but a double-distilled traitor, who, volunteering to Cromwell to

[1] *i.e.*, relation in God; persons who had stood as God-parents for the same child were called godsibs, or gossips.

serve as a spy on Pole, in reality betrayed Cromwell to Pole], "well and taill; if not, I would Master Robert Acton" [son of the former Acton], "the King's true and faithful subject and servant, had his thing" [Throgmorton's property], "at Wynche, for it lieth very commodiously for him; and then, as he is always willing, so he should be more able to do his grace service. Thus I run riot, but presuming of your goodness.

"If Friar Gaulyne have suffered condignly for his misbehaviour, I doubt not but when you see your time, you will extend your charity unto him, with some injunctions to do better."[1]

On Christmas Day, Latimer is again writing to Cromwell, almost ashamed of his importunity.

"Alack, my singular good lord, saving that I have experience of your benign goodness, that you can be *omnia omnibus*" [all things to all men], "to do all men good, I might be irk of my own importunity. As for this letter inclosed" [now lost], "it shall speak for itself, and be heard as God shall work with your ready goodness. When I moved the King's grace in the matter, his highness did favourably hear me, etc.

"As for the Coventry matter" [appointment of new prior], "Master Acton and Master Nevell's matters, and all other my further suits, I commit to your approved wisdom, high discretion, and charitable goodness.

"Mr. Doctor Barnes hath preached here with me at Hartlebury, and at my request at Worcester,[2] and also at Evesham. Surely he is alone in handling a piece of Scripture, and in setting forth of Christ he hath no fellow. I would wish that the King's grace might once hear him. But I pray you let him tell you how two monks hath preached alate in Evesham; I trust you will hearken to them and look upon them; for though they be exempt from me, yet they be not exempt from your lordship. I pray God amend them, or else I fear they be exempt from the flock of Christ; very true monks, that is to say, pseudo-prophets and false Christian men, perverters of Scripture; sly, wily, disobedientiaries to all good orders; ever starting up, as they dare, to do hurt.

"This Christmas-day" [1537].

[1] State Paper Office.

[2] In Latimer's *Remains* this is erroneously deciphered *Winchester*, the last place in England where Barnes would have been permitted to preach.

A.D. 1538.

The year 1538 was one of the busiest of Latimer's episcopal life, and one of the most eventful in the history of the English Reformation. That great movement still continued, though slowly, to advance. This very year it reached the highest point that it ever attained under Henry's rule; and unhappily, before the year closed, there were plain traces of the commencement of a reaction, which for a time restored to the adherents of the Romish faith something of their former power. Latimer was one of the first and most prominent sufferers by this change of policy; and it will be necessary, in order to understand the progress of that movement which drove him from his bishopric, to observe with care the political and ecclesiastical proceedings of the period.

The death of his third Queen, Jane Seymour, plunged Henry for a time into the deepest grief. In a few weeks, however, he was again engaged in negotiations for a fourth wife, and the minds of English statesmen were again racked with perplexities. On former occasions, Henry's affections had been fixed, he wanted merely to procure the means of gratifying them. Now he was left in a state of embarrassment unprecedented in his experience. No domestic beauty had captivated his fancy; his heart was free; and he knew not where to look for a suitable partner to share the somewhat perilous honours of his throne. In any circumstances the choice of a Queen is a matter of importance to a nation; but in the peculiar circumstances of England, the choice had become a matter almost of supreme consequence. If Henry should ally himself with any of the great Catholic royal families of the Continent, it was not improbable that the onward progress of the Reform-

ation might be checked, and that much that had been already accomplished might be undone. If, on the other hand, a Queen should be found at the courts of any of the German Protestant Princes, then it might be reasonably hoped that, under her auspices, what was still wanting in the English Reformation might be completed. The rival parties, therefore, watched with eager anxiety the progress of the matrimonial negotiations, doing what they could to influence the King in a choice which must more or less affect their deepest interests. At first, mainly from the force of old habit, and a certain proud disregard of the petty German Confederates, Henry sought a Queen at the courts of France and Spain. Mary of Guise, and the Duchess of Milan, were successively solicited, but ineffectually; and after a year of fruitless negotiations, in which Henry was not always very honestly treated by monarchs who somewhat distrusted him, he had still to find some worthy successor to Jane Seymour. Cromwell had not as yet ventured to suggest to his royal master any fair candidate for his throne and affections. But he and Cranmer were labouring assiduously to establish a firm alliance between England and the German Protestants. It was the dearest wish of Cranmer's heart to unite all the Reformed Churches "in one sound, pure, evangelical doctrine, conformable to the discipline of the primitive Church."[1] It was a noble and pious ambition worthy of the gentle, large-hearted primate, whose purse and whose palace were ever open to any man of learning and piety, from whatever nation he came; and it was no temporary piece of political expediency, but a cherished, deep-rooted purpose faithfully prosecuted whenever any favourable opportunity presented itself. Cromwell too was equally anxious to promote this

[1] Letter to Joachim Vadian, 1537; *Zurich Letters*, p. 14.

league of all the Reformed Churches of Europe, as a necessary measure of defence against the oft-threatened danger of an universal coalition of the Catholic princes in a crusade against Protestantism. For the German Protestants it was clearly a matter of the highest moment to secure the patronage and co-operation of so powerful a monarch as Henry; and it was not unreasonable, considering the character of English policy for the last eight years, to hope that Henry would consent to join their league. Accordingly, in May, Commissioners arrived from the German confederated princes, bringing with them a letter from Melancthon, entreating Henry to aid the Church which was exposed to so many dangers, by establishing a firm and enduring league.[1] Long conferences ensued, lasting over several months; articles were drawn up to serve, it was hoped, as the common creed of both Churches. Cranmer laboured most assiduously to promote unity; but there were some differences of opinion which could not be harmonised. Henry, who was always great in theological controversies, and had shared in the discussions with an ability that commanded the respect of both parties, could not be persuaded to relinquish his adherence to some practices which the German Commissioners censured as the very foundation of Popish tyranny.[2] The three great points on which Henry would not give way were the denying of the cup to the laity, private masses, and the celibacy of the clergy. The Commissioners addressed an elaborate letter on these subjects to Henry, to which he, through Tunstal, made as elaborate a reply, but without any satisfactory result.[3] The negotiations proved abortive, and the Commissioners re-

[1] See his letter in Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, i. 2, 384, from the Cotton MSS.
[2] Their letter on the subject, preserved in the Cotton MSS., is printed in full in Burnet, iv. 352, etc.
[3] This also is printed in Burnet, iv. 373, etc.

turned to Germany, without accomplishing their purpose. There can be no doubt that the failure of this attempt to form a great Protestant alliance was for the time disastrous to the Reformation in England. Henry perhaps felt piqued that the Commissioners had not shown more deference to his arguments; he probably expected that they would have sacrificed their opinions to his, instead of asking him to make concessions to them; and the Romish party in England who had hitherto conformed to the royal policy, began to circulate rumours that Henry had altogether abandoned his old faith, so that his cherished reputation for orthodoxy seemed to be at stake, and he was thereby more than ever confirmed in his own opinions.

We left Latimer keeping his Christmas at Hartlebury, his old friend Barnes, and probably some other old friends, sharing his hospitality. He remained some few weeks longer, we suppose, at his country residence, reposing after his recent labours, and recovering, it may be hoped, from the pain in his back and the "threatened consumption;" and towards the end of February he again repaired to London, possibly to discharge his duty in rotation as one of the preachers at Paul's Cross or the Court. Perhaps, also, he had been summoned to assist with his powerful eloquence the great practical Reformation which Cromwell was actively promoting. There was no abuse which Latimer had so frequently or so eloquently denounced as the pilgrimages to relics and images; and much had already been done to free England from that wretched superstition. The injunctions issued by Cromwell in 1536 had expressly ordered that, "to the intent that all superstition and hypocrisy may vanish away, the clergy shall not set forth or extol any images, relics, or miracles, for any superstition or lucre; nor allure the people by any enticements to the

pilgrimages of any saint, as though it were proper or peculiar to that saint to give this commodity or that." But in spite of injunctions these practices still continued. It was difficult to disabuse the minds of the ignorant of prejudices which they had inherited from their ancestors; and the priests were equally unwilling to abandon a custom which was a fertile source of revenue. It was resolved therefore to bring the most famous images into discredit, by exhibiting to the eyes of the populace the wires and concealed machinery by which the priests had caused the images to wink, nod, and shed tears, to the astonishment and edification of the worshippers. Every county in England had its local deity, some image reputed to possess miraculous powers, the kissing or reverencing of which (always after an offering) was deemed a specific for various diseases; and their shrines were crowded with worshippers. No image was in higher repute in the South of England than the "Rood of Bexley," in Kent. It rolled its eyes, bowed its body, knitted its forehead into a frown, and dropped its lower lip, as if to speak; or in the rude verse of an enthusiastic Protestant of the period:—

> "He was made to juggle,
> His eyes would goggle,
> He would bend his brows and frown;
> With his head he would nod
> Like a proper young god,
> His shafts would go up and down."[1]

Geoffrey Chambers, one of Cromwell's visitors, detected the mechanism by which these tricks were performed; and by the advice of some friends he took the wonder-working image to Maidstone on the market-day, and there, before the congregated crowds, he exhibited the "false, crafty, and

[1] The *Fantasy of Idolatrie*, Foxe, vol. v.

subtle handling thereof to the dishonour of God, and illusion of the people.[1]"

It was determined, however, to make a more public exhibition of the fraud; and, after the fashion of those days, a somewhat scenic performance was arranged for Sunday, February 24, in which Latimer bore a conspicuous part, and of which we fortunately possess an account from an eye-witness.

"The images which used to work miracles by the artifices of the devil and his angels, that is to say, the monks, friars, fish-eaters, and others of that stamp" [for our informant was very indignant at the imposture] "were conveyed on horseback to London, at the command of the bishops. A public sermon was preached from the pulpit of St. Paul's" [rather Paul's Cross] "to the congregation assembled in Christ; after which a certain image, brought away from Kent, called "the Rood of Grace," was first exhibited. The preacher, the Bishop of Rochester" [Hilsey, once of Bristol], "explained all the trickery and imposture in the presence of the people. By means of some person pulling a cord, most artfully contrived and ingeniously inserted at the back, the image rolled about its eyes just like a living creature; and on the pulling of other cords it gave a nod of assent or dissent according to the occasion. It never restored health to any sick person, notwithstanding great numbers afflicted with divers diseases were carried to it, and laid prostrate before it, unless some one disguised himself of set purpose, and pretended to be sick; in which case it would give a nod, as though promising the restoration of health, that it might by this means confirm its imposture. Then again, by some other contrivance, unknown to me, it opened and shut its mouth; and to make an end of my story at once, after all its tricks had been exposed to the people, it was broken into small pieces, and it was a great delight to anyone who could obtain a single fragment, either, as I suppose, to put in the fire in their own houses, or else to keep by them by way of reproof to such kind of impostors.

"After this, Bishop *Latimer*, in the western part of St. Paul's, carried a small image in his hand, which he threw out of the church, though the inhabitants of the country whence it came, constantly

[1] Letter of Chambers to Cromwell, in Froude, iii., p. 288, from the State Paper Office.

affirmed that eight oxen would be unable to remove it from its place."[1]

This wonderful image was no other than the "Rood of Ramsbury," in Wiltshire, of which the author of the *Fantasy of Idolatry* has thus sung:—

"The sweet rood of Ramsbury,
Twenty mile from Malmesbury,
Was ofttimes put in fear;
And now at the last,
He hath a bridling cast,
And is gone I know not where.

Yet hath it been said,
His virtue so weighed,
That sixteen oxen and moe,
Were not able to carry
This rood from Ramsbury,
Though he took seven horses also."

The proceedings thus inaugurated in London were imitated all over England, especially in those dioceses where the bishops favoured the Reformation. Much of Latimer's time, as we shall see, was occupied during the summer, with examining and exploding miraculous relics; and in the dioceses where the bishops were inclined to hang back from any active steps, their flagging zeal was stimulated to increased diligence by a new issue of more peremptory injunctions, which shall come under our notice in due order.

One result of Latimer's visitation of his diocese had been to make it quite plain to him, that the proper discharge of his duties as a Reforming bishop, was far beyond his strength. For ages too many of the bishops had thought less of duties than of pleasure and magnificence;

[1] *Zurich Letters*, p. 606; see also pp. 604, 609.

and the size of their dioceses had occasioned them very little anxiety. With the Reformation a higher sense of duty had begun to prevail, and the unwieldly extent of many of the dioceses, rendering any proper performance of episcopal duties utterly impracticable even for the most energetic prelate, attracted the attention of Parliament. In the session of 1536, regulations had been enacted for providing suffragans to assist the bishops in their duties. Latimer's diocese, including as has already been noticed what were subsequently the three dioceses of Worcester, Gloucester, and Bristol, was much too large to be effectually overseen by one prelate, and he wished to secure the co-operation of a suffragan. On March 2, accordingly, in compliance with the terms of the statute, "our well-beloved and faithful counsellor, Hugh, by Divine providence, Bishop of Worcester, presented to the King, two honest and discreet clergymen, of learned and good conversation, for the office of suffragan Bishop of Bristol."[1] Of the two thus presented, the King selected Henry Holbeach, already known to us, having been appointed Prior of Worcester Abbey, on the strong recommendation of Cranmer; an office which he had evidently discharged to Latimer's satisfaction. No time was lost in consecrating Holbeach to his new office; on Sunday, March 24, he was duly consecrated by Cranmer, at Lambeth,[2] Latimer being present as one of the assisting prelates; and he would be immediately afterwards despatched to preside over that refractory portion of Latimer's diocese, whose fierce theological disputes had so lately called for the intervention of royal authority, and were not even yet allayed.

Latimer, indeed, it would appear, stood urgently in need

[1] The original is in Rymer, xiv. 586.
[2] Strype's *Cranmer*, from Cranmer's *Register*.

of assistance in his duties; for his health, never robust, and lately so much enfeebled, seems this spring to have been again in a very precarious state. Fortunately he was again residing at the house of his faithful nurse, and with good Mrs. Statham, to watch over him, and "pymper" him with loving assiduity, nothing would be wanting that kindness and care could supply. It was during this illness, in April, 1538, as we conjecture, that the following letter was addressed to Cromwell:—

"RIGHT HONOURABLE, *Salutem*" [greeting]. "This bearer, Mr. Butler of Droitwich, one of the Commissioners" [for ascertaining the value of livings], "hath to certify your lordship of the misbehaviour of a certain priest in the commotion time," [Pilgrimage of Grace; said misbehaviour is too shocking to be here related at length, but may be seen by the curious, in Latimer's *Letters*, p. 391.] "O unholy and also unchaste chastity" [celibacy of clergy], "which is preferred in a Christian realm to chaste and holy matrimony.

"I pray you, my good lord, pardon me that I do write unto you so unadvisedly, for I am light-headed for lack of sleep; not that I can sleep and will not, but that I would sleep and cannot; but all as doth please Almighty God, to whom I commit your good lordship, but too I cannot forget my nurse, to bring her to your good remembrance, with all opportunity, *et Nevellus præsens suspirat benignitatem tuam*" [and Nevell, my servant, who is here with me, also hopes for your favour].[1]

It is not impossible that Latimer's sleeplessness arose from mental excitement as much as from bodily weakness. He was again troubled with a renewal of the theological discussions that had so vexed and wearied him in the previous spring. The *Institution*, it will be remembered, had not been revised by Henry from want of time; but the seclusion of his bereavement had apparently afforded him leisure to oversee and correct it. Henry's corrections were

[1] Latimer's *Remains*, p. 390, from State Paper Office: undated, but almost certainly belonging to the spring of 1538.

submitted for animadversion to Cranmer;[1] and Latimer was doubtless asked by the primate to give his opinion on the controverted points, much to his distress. Sundry theological discussions and resolutions seem also to have occupied these early months of 1538,[2] in which Latimer shared, and by which he was much agitated and perplexed. In the beginning of April, also, he was involved in an unpleasant trial, affecting the life of the person accused, and therefore not unlikely to produce sleeplessness in any man of humane feelings. The friars, repressed for some time by the utter failure of the Northern rebellion, were again venting their treasonable insinuations, and attempting to excite the people to sedition. Among others, an Observant friar, John Forest by name, was apprehended and brought before Cranmer and Latimer for examination.[3] He had, it seemed, abused the confessional by teaching treason to his penitents; denying the lawfulness of Henry's assumption of the title of "Supreme Head of the Church in England." When examined, he admitted that he had, like all other Englishmen, taken the oath acknowledging Henry's supremacy; "but," said he, boldly, "it was only my outward man that gave assent, my inward man never consented thereunto." It was also proven that he had taught various heresies, condemned by Convocation, and contrary to royal injunctions. The law was plain, and the fate of the poor friar was inevitable, unless he could be induced to abjure. Cranmer's clemency was proverbial; Latimer was by no means bloodthirsty; nay, had he not in his noble letter to Henry maintained that persecution was

[1] See Cranmer's *Letters*, pp. 358, 359, etc.

[2] There is, for example, a paper on *The Functions of Bishops*, signed by Latimer, which is *certainly* not of later date than April, 1538, probably not of much earlier. Burnet, iv. 336, from Cotton MSS.

[3] Cranmer's *Letters*, p. 365.

a "sure mark of true preaching" and advocated liberty of opinion? Every effort, therefore, would be made to induce Forest to retract and submit to the censure of the Church; and greatly to the comfort of Latimer and Cranmer, he abjured and submitted, and was confined in Newgate till the royal pleasure could be ascertained.

Unhappily his brother friars were allowed too ready access to him; they upbraided him with his cowardice and apostasy, and when his formal abjuration was sent to him to read he utterly refused, and resolutely stood by the heresy and treason that had been charged against him. There was no alternative; Forest was, by law, guilty as a heretic and a traitor; he had recanted his recantation; and however reluctantly, the sentence must be pronounced and executed. This did not fill up the cup of Latimer's distress; it was the custom of the time that some one should preach at an execution of this sort, to confute the errors of the sufferer, and, if possible, induce him to repent. For this most ungrateful task Latimer was selected by Cromwell. To any one of ordinary tenderness of heart the duty must have been a revolting one; and Latimer was anxious if possible to get quit of it, anxious also that mercy might somehow be extended even yet to Forest, as the following letter very plainly shows:—

"Sir, if it be your pleasure, as it is, that I shall play the fool after my customable manner when Forest shall suffer, I would wish that my stage stood near unto Forest; for I would endeavour myself so to content the people that therewith I might also convert Forest, God so helping, or rather altogether working; wherefore I would that he should hear what I shall say, *si forte*, etc." [if perchance he may repent.] "Forest, as I hear, is not duly accompanied" [has not very good companions] "in Newgate for his amendment, with the White Friars of Doncaster, and Monks of the Charter House, in a fit chamber, more like to indurate than to

mollify; whether through the fault of the sheriff or of the jailer, or both, no man could sooner discern than your lordship. Some think he is rather comforted in his way than discouraged; some think he is allowed both to hear mass and also to receive the sacrament; which if it be so, it is enough to confirm him in his obstinacy, as though he were to suffer for a just cause. These things would" [should] "be tried, *ut retegantur ex multis cordibus cogitationes*," [that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed]. "It is to be feared that some instilled into him, that though he had persevered in his abjuration, yet he should have suffered afterward for treason; and so by that occasion he might have been induced to refuse his abjuration. If he would yet with heart return to his abjuration, I would wish his pardon; such is my foolishness" [foolish weakness].

"I thank your good lordship for Gloucester" [some benefit to that city], "desiring the continuance of your goodness to Master Nevell" [of whom and his suit we shall hear more anon]; "for I doubt not but that you will of yourself remember my nurse. Thus I cannot but be bold with your lordship.

"It were good you would sometimes send for masters of colleges in Cambridge and Oxford with their statutes; and if the *statutes* be not good and to the furtherance of good letters, change them; if the *masters* be not good, but honourers of drawlatches, change *them*. May 18, 1538."[1]

In this letter Sir Henry Ellis, who regards Latimer as a coarse buffoon, just as some historians have considered Cromwell a hypocritical ruffian, sees, of course, a confirmation of his curious theory; but readers, who have followed Latimer's career and know him better, will gather from it that he "reluctantly accepted the ungrateful service,"[2] and that he would willingly have welcomed any means of rescuing the unhappy man from his fate.

Forest and Cromwell both proving stedfast, Latimer was compelled to perform his part in the tragic scene. And a strange, dreadful scene it was, as we catch a glimpse of it in the pages of the contemporary chronicles.

[1] State Paper Office: Latimer's *Remains*, p. 391.
[2] Froude, iii. 295.

On May 22, a pair of new gallows was set up in Smithfield, whereon Forest was hanged alive by the middle and armpits.

"Opposite the gallows there was prepared," says Hall,[1] "a pulpit where a right reverend father in God, and a renowned and famous clerk, the Bishop of Worcester, called Hugh Latimer, preached a sermon, confuting Forest's errors and moving him to repentance. But all availed not, so that in the end, when the Bishop asked him what state he would die in, the friar with a loud voice answered and said that if an angel should come down from heaven, and teach him any other doctrine than he had received and believed from his youth, he would not believe him, and that if his body should be cut joint after joint, or member after member burnt, hanged, or what pain soever might be done to his body, he would never turn from his old profession; more, he said to the Bishop, that seven years past he dared not have made such a sermon for his life."

The sermon over, and no signs of penitence being visible, the civic authorities, who were present in great state, proceeded to the more terrible part of the day's proceedings. Beneath the unhappy friar a fire was kindled, and on the top of the fagots was placed a famous image brought from Wales, known to the common people as Dderfel Gadern, reputed to have power to take anyone out of hell that offered before it,[2] and of which an ancient tradition affirmed that one day it should burn a *whole forest*. The ancient tradition was now to receive a horrible and quite unexpected fulfilment. The poor man was slowly burned to death: "he died impatiently," says Grafton, "seizing the ladder:" but it is enough; the reader will gladly turn from the scene,

[1] Hall's *Chronicle;* the narrative is also supplemented from Grafton and other sources.

[2] "David Darvel Gatheren
As saith the Welshmen
Fetched outlaws out of hell, etc."—*Fantasy of Idolatry.*

sad and sick at heart, as Latimer no doubt was, to welcome other matters.

Latimer seems to have left London almost immediately after for Hartlebury, to superintend the burning of images, a more congenial task than the burning of heretics. But before accompanying him to his diocese two occurrences in London are worthy to be noted. On May 8, while the trial of Forest was pending, Fox, the Bishop of Hereford, died, a great friend of the Reformation, a prelate of much learning and of the highest character. His removal was a great loss to the Protestant party; and Cranmer and Cromwell were egregiously deceived in the successor whom they appointed, who was no other than Edmund Bonner, hitherto distinguished as a zealous Reformer, but destined to develop into the Bloody Bonner of Queen Mary's reign. The German Commissioners, also, who had arrived in May, and had brought with them copies of Bullinger's learned works on *The Authority of Holy Scriptures*, and *The Duties of Bishops*, presented Latimer amongst others with these books. It was a tribute to his reputation; and though he had not yet devoted much time to the study of the theology of the Continental Reformers, he was exceedingly gratified with the compliment paid him; "nothing in the whole course of his life had ever been more gratifying to him," and he hoped soon to have leisure for the careful perusal of the valuable volumes. He promised to write to Bullinger and thank him for his kindness, but if he ever wrote, his letter has not been preserved.[1]

Leaving London, therefore, after three months of sickness and anxiety, Latimer was at Hartlebury in the commencement of June, busied in the many affairs of

[1] *Zurich Letters*, p. 612.

his diocese, and especially active in exposing the many impostures connected with the miraculous images that abounded on all sides. Of his proceedings during the summer and autumn months, we have a copious account in his correspondence with Cromwell, which was prosecuted with greater activity than ever. The biographer cannot, therefore, do better than insert in their order the letters to Cromwell, with such brief note or commentary as occasion may require.

In the first letter, Latimer writes partly on his own affairs, and one is glad to see with greatly recovered spirits.

"Sir, I was minded to have been a suitor to your lordship, seeing I cannot attain to the use of my park at Allchurch, for my preferment to some good part of the demesne of Berslay, for my money, which is even at hand, to relief of my great need to such things.[1] For I trow no man, having the name of so many things, hath the use of so few as I, handled indeed like a ward. But now, hearing that this bearer, Mr. Evance" [the bearer also of the former letter on Prince Edward's birth], "hath begun and entered into the same suit beforehand with your lordship, and is put in comfort of the same to be furthered therein, as I perceive by a letter come to him alate, I leave my purpose to begin for myself, and wish good success to his beginning" [which did not succeed, however]; "very loth to hinder or let any man's suit begun. And surely, sir, I suppose you shall bestow it right well upon him; for I suppose him to be a witty and politic man, both active and expert in things to be done, and no less prompt and ready than many ways able to do you service in your affairs. Now, sir, the more you incline your goodness to further him in this his suit, the more able he shall be to do you service from time to time, as you shall call upon him. And though this you know to be true much better than I, without my relation, yet I trust you will not mislike nor ill-expound, but

[1] The following, says Leland, were the lands of the Bishop of Worcester: the Palace at Worcester; Hartlebury Castle; Allchurch, two miles from Bordesley [Berslay] Abbey; Northwick, two miles from Worcester; Whitington; Hillingdon near Uxbridge; and Strond Place in London, removed to make way for Somerset House.

take in good part this my writing: forasmuch as I must needs, being desired, something write, though never so foolishly, after my accustomed manner. And you have been so good and have shewed your goodness so largely unto me, that many men doth think that my poor remembrance with a word or two unto your lordship, should further their causes with you. But yet methink you smile at one thing, that I, a man of so little policy, so little experience and activity, so little wit and wisdom, would take upon me to judge another man politic and expert, active, witty and wise. Well, sir, if I had done but only that" [what], "made you to smile, to the refreshing of your mind in the midst of your matters" [negotiations for royal marriages and Protestant alliances], "I have not done nothing: and the rest I commit to your accustomable goodness, with the suit of my nurse, which I am certain you will remember with all opportunity.

"And Master Nevell, making himself sure of his suit" [for some abbey-lands near Droitwich, which he did not get after all], "hath got the widow" [had married a rich widow worth forty marks a-year],[1] "trusting surely in your lordship's goodness for the performance of the same, not without pledging of my poor honesty in the same behalf.

"I trust your lordship will bestow our great Sibyl" [image of our 'Lady of Worcester,' held in high sanctity in the neighbourhood, of which presently], "to some good purpose, *ut pereat memoria cum sonitu*" [that the memory of her may perish with some public outcry]. "She hath been the devil's instrument to bring many, I fear, to eternal fire; now she herself, with her old sister of Walsingham, her young sister of Ipswich, with their other two sisters of Doncaster and Penrise" [all famous images, much venerated by pilgrims], "would make a jolly muster in Smithfield; they would not be all day in burning.

"Thus God be with you and preserve you long to such good purpose that the living God may be duly known in His spirit and verity. 13 Junii, at Hartlebury."[2]

The great Sibyl, which Latimer here wishes to be consigned to the flames, was a famous statue of the Virgin in Worcester Cathedral, held particularly sacred, and

[1] *Letters on the Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 194.
[2] State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers*, C. 3, 21.

visited by crowds of worshippers. Its pretensions to reverence, however, were somewhat rudely dispelled a few weeks after the date of his letter. By Cromwell's order the statue was stripped of the gaudy trappings in which the mistaken piety of the ignorant people had arrayed her; and lo! it was no image of the Virgin at all, nor of any other female, but the statue of some long-deceased bishop of the diocese! Superstition was thus laughed to scorn; yet there were some who could not, even by this exposure, be convinced of their folly. On the eve of the feast of the Assumption of Mary (August 14), a citizen of Worcester came up to the figure, which had been the general laughing-stock for some days, and in a voice of strange emotion exclaimed, "Ah, lady, art thou stripped now? I have seen the day that as clean men had been stripped at a pair of gallows, as were they that stripped thee." Then he kisses the image, and turns to the people, and says, "Ye that be disposed to offer, the figure is no worse than it was before;" "having a remorse unto her," adds the witness, in pity.[1] The wretched "Sibyl" thus exposed and degraded, was subsequently conveyed not to Smithfield but to Chelsea, in company with "her old sister of Walsingham," and various other images, and there publicly burnt amid the jeers of the spectators.

The next letter introduces us to a fertile source of care, the condition of the still remaining religious houses.

"Sir, by this bill inclosed,[2] your lordship can perceive something how the world doth wag with Warwick College" [collegiate church

[1] Froude, iii. 236, from the State Papers.

[2] The Bill is still preserved and bound up with the letter. It is a complaint dated June 13, 1538, against Wattwood, for "injuries and wrongs," contrary to their statutes, "and also in breaking of our lord Bishop's injunctions:" it is signed by the dean and two of the canons of the Church.—State Paper Office. *Chapter House Papers.*

at Warwick]. "I advertised Master Wattwood" [one of the canons of the church], "speaking with him in London, to hasten himself homeward for sparing of expenses, and to refer their whole suit to your good remembrance; but the man, belike, doth delight to lie at London upon the college cost, caring neither for statutes, nor yet injunctions, bearing him bold, I trow, of some authority from your lordship, not considering that his authority is to see the statutes kept, and not to break them. I pray you be good lord to the poor college; so poor, that in good sooth, I took not my customable procurations" [episcopal fees] "of them in my visitation.[1] And, whereas I enjoined them a lecture of Scripture" [some one to read the English Scripture to them], "I am fain to reward the reader myself, for anything that doth come from them: *verum id curat populus scilicet*" [I suppose the people are much distressed about that], "Master Wattwood careth greatly for it" [said ironically]. "And where" [whereas] "the treasure-house should have three sundry keys, both by their statutes, and also my injunctions, to which both they be all sworn, he looketh upon them altogether as pleaseth himself. Sir, seeing the King's grace hath their chief jewel that they had, they being so poor themselves, his highness should do graciously to remember them with some piece of some broken abbey, or else I fear they will grow shortly to nought; for, as I hear, the vicars and other ministers sing and say unwaged. But your approved wisdom can consider better than I what is to be done therein, and so God prosper you with good remembrance of Mistress Statham's suit. 17 Junii. At Hartlebury: short-winded."[2]

For what Mistress Statham, Latimer's nurse, was suing in those days, we cannot now tell; but it was evidently not Latimer's fault if she was unsuccessful. Cranmer, too, lent his influence to support the suit, and heartily requested Cromwell that for his sake, he would the more willingly grant what was asked.[3] Such patrons could scarcely ask in vain, and we may hope, therefore, that the good lady was not unrewarded for her kind assiduity in nursing Latimer.

We have already heard of "Master Nevell's" suit,

[1] Yet, at the dissolution, their revenues amounted to £334 a year, or upwards of £4,500; not extreme poverty, surely.

[2] State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers*, C. 3. 21.

[3] Cranmer's *Letters*, p. 375.

which Latimer had so strongly urged, and of which both felt so sure, that on the faith of obtaining the coveted land Nevell had married. The suit miscarried, however, in spite of their confidence, and Latimer's next letter is full of lamentation.

"Ah, my good lord Privy Seal, what should I say, *Quum tuo solius verbo laxabam rete, et nunc tandem res rediit in ignominiam meam*" [as it was at your word alone that I let down the net, and now the matter has issued in my disgrace], "with an honest gentlewoman my poor honesty I pledged, which is now distained, and my credence, the greatest treasure that I have, not a little minished; for that in Durtwych" [Droitwich], "and here about the same, we be fallen into the dirt, and be all-to dirtied, even up to the ears; we be jeered, mocked, and laughed to scorn, *ut qui cœpimus ædificare, neque consummare potuimus*" [as those who began to build and could not finish]. "A wily Py" [Mr. Pye, who got the lands that Nevell had asked for] "hath wilily gone between us and home, when we thought" [of] "nothing less, but, as good simple souls, made all cocksure. In good faith I would wish to Mr. Py as good a thing as it and better too; but not so and after that manner, to the defeating of a suit begun and near hand obtained; which if I had suspected, I should perchance have prevented, saving that I would not show myself to mistrust your pretence" [promised help] "nor to have either in doubt or fear your enterprise. But it is now too late to call"[back] "yesterday again, and to go about to undo that that is done. For Master Py doth say that the King hath given it him. I pray God much good might it do him; for I will no longer anguish myself with a matter that I cannot remedy. But I commit altogether to God and to your high discretion, which I am sure meant rightly, and with the loss of the same *ut in humanis fit rebus*," [as usual in human affairs] "sought opportunity.

"But I trust you will not forget the common suit of the whole country: for better a sheriff annual" [annually changed] "than perpetual,[1] unless he be good, which is not easy to find: and here is much bearing and bolstering, and malefactors do not lack their

[1] The sheriff of Worcester in 1538 was Walter Walsh, who had been sheriff for four years; his predecessor Ferrers was sheriff for nine years; and Sir William Compton, Ferrer's predecessor, was sheriff for ten years; after 1538, the sheriffs were changed annually, as Latimer here suggested.

supporters; yet by many changings we may chance some time to light upon some one good one, among many ill. And your lordship doth know well enough that if I be ruled of one at home, I am unmeet to rule many from home: for if affection do reign in me" [if I am partial], "then I will not" [rule well]; "if ignorance and unexpertness, then I cannot.

"As for the town-clerk of Kidderminster, after due probation" [he] "hath confessed his folly: but forasmuch as the Commissioners have not authority to punish him accordingly, but it is reserved to the assize, where *as men be friended*, so, they say, *things be ended*, I have no great expectation: but I think the Commissioners will shortly certify. And as for Master Cornwell and his pretty doing" [all unknown, as well as the town-clerk's folly], "I will write shortly. Thus, God preserve you. *Postridie Jo. Bapt.* [June 25.] At Hartlebury."[1]

Last October, when Latimer was in his visitation, we heard him complain of the virulence of a Mr. Clopton, near Stratford-on-Avon, who had been stirring up the peasants against the Reforming preachers. His remonstrances against the unruly squire had apparently produced no effect; Clopton had now proceeded to open treason, and Latimer once more had to write and invoke the aid of Cromwell.

"Now, good my lord Privy Seal, show your charitable goodness in this matter of Mr. Lucy. I have sent unto your lordship his letters. If that Mr. William Clopton may be suffered thus to rage, it will be but folly for any true preachers to come into that part of my diocese. I heartily require herein both the use of your authority, and also of your counsel; and that you would send for the priest" [perhaps Sir Large] "and also that Mr. Clopton, and to reduce him into some order; and according to justice to end the matter, which is now at length made treason, and so not appertaining to my court. And in what case are they in, that have veiled treason so long? But I refer all things to your approved wisdom, and singular favour towards the truth of God's word, and execution of justice, that good Master Lucy be not discouraged in his hearty goodness.

"Yours, this St. James' Day" [July 25, 1538], "even now going to horse,

[1] State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers*, C. 3. 21.

when Master Lucy's servant came to me, which" [who], "if your lordship be at leisure, can tell the whole process. At Hartlebury."[1]

While Latimer was thus busying himself with the multitudinous cares and duties of his office, a great and important step in the progress of the Reformation was gradually being effected all over England. The smaller religious houses had already been suppressed, their manifold vices and irregularities having roused popular indignation against them. The larger houses were left standing, and Parliament had acknowledged that they in general were free from the scandalous ignorance and immorality of the minor houses; but Henry, whose treasury was exhausted, began to look with covetous eyes on their large revenues and valuable possessions. As a matter of policy, the existence of these establishments, holding so much of the land of England in perpetual mortmain, was hostile to the material progress of an enterprising nation: and the toleration of large and wealthy bodies of ecclesiastics, exempt from the jurisdiction of the Bishops, and bound by their vows and organisation to recognise the authority of the Pope, could not but be unfriendly to ecclesiastical order and the progress of the Reformation. In fact, their continued existence was absolutely incompatible with the principles of the Reformation; and in no Reformed country can such institutions ever find root. The great abbots and lordly rulers of these wealthy establishments were themselves sensible of the insecurity of their position; and many of them were willing, due provision being made for their own interests, to surrender their houses, with all their possessions, manors, tithes, jewels, furniture and rights of every kind to the King.[2]

[1] State Paper Office. *Ubi supra.*

[2] The forms of surrender may be read in full in Rymer, vol. xiv; and in Burnet, iv. 223.

Visitors were quietly and rapidly going through every county, using all manner of influences, good and bad, to induce the abbots to surrender, and with a very considerable amount of success, no fewer than one hundred and sixteen having surrendered in this very year 1538.[1] Latimer's opinion on this subject, we have already heard, and we shall again hear; but the recollection of what was in progress will explain many of the allusions in the next letter to Cromwell.

"Sir, as I perceive by this bearer Mr. Evance, I have to thank your good lordship for the same, for that you were good lord unto him, and that the rather for my sake, as he saith; for the which and all other your singular goodness I most heartily thank you, and even so desire you to continue the same; and I shall daily pray for your prosperous estate, according to my bounden duty.

"A certain man told me that the bloody abbot" [perhaps the abbot of Evesham, called *bloody* for an unknown but doubtless sufficient reason] "should have said" [*i.e.* had said] "alate among his brethren, that his last coming up to London, by my occasion, cost him, beside the charges of his journey up and down, seven score pounds: wherefore he was not able to make provision for household; and therefore required the best mitre, the best cross, and another thing or two, to make *chevance*" [to raise credit] "withal for provision. But now you say 'What matter maketh that to you?' Truth it is: but yet to tell it you I thought it not amiss, because it may make matter to you: for so may all the jewels of the house be surveyed away and you not knowing" [and so the King's treasury not be enriched with the wealth of the houses].

"This letter inclosed came to me yesterday from your lordship's visitor.[2] I send it, *ut videat dominatio tua quid sit actum*" [that your lordship may see what has been done]. "God forbid but his labour should be well taken! and God forbid that such deceivable

[1] See the list in Burnet, vol. iv. 234, etc.

[2] The letter, still preserved, is from Richard Ingworth, giving an account of his visits to eighteen places, of which he had left but one standing; he was anxious to know how the Lord Privy Seal took the matter, and adds, "The friars, in those parts that I have been in, have many favourers, and great labour is made for their continuance still, and divers trust to see some of them set up again, and some be up to sue for some of them to stand."—State Paper Office.

hypocrisy should up again and stand at any man's suit; no, though they would give *aureos montes*" [mountains of gold] "therefore.

"Mr. Nevell, your hearty servant to all his power, took a pardoner" [person having licence to sell indulgences from the Pope] "alate misordering himself, and therefore took his seal from him; and because the pardoner doth not return again for it, hath sent it to your lordship, trusting that your lordship will pardon him for so doing. Such new things do but maintain the people in their old superstition, as the pardoners doth abuse them and the poor people doth take them. I trust in your good lordship as touching to have a good neighbour:[1] *unde pendet ut cum fructu ipse prædicem, alioquin totam noctem laboraturus et parum aut nihil capturus*" [for on that depends my preaching with advantage, otherwise I may labour all night and catch little or nothing]. "But I doubt nothing but your lordship hath me in remembrance.

"Hereby" [at Redstone Ferry] "is an hermitage in a rock by Severn, able to lodge five hundred men, and as ready for thieves or traitors as true men. I would not have hermits masters of such dens, but rather that some faithful man had it. Mr. Robert Acton, at his return, shall shew you further.

"I pray your good lordship take in worth this foolish farraginary scribbling.

"*Postridie Bartho.* [Aug. 25.] At Hartlebury."[2]

In September, Cromwell issued a second series of injunctions to the clergy, proceeding still further in the direction of a Reformation than the previous series: indeed, this second set of injunctions may not improperly be looked upon as the culminating point of the Reformation in the reign of Henry VIII. They ordered a copy of the "whole Bible of the largest volume in English"[3] to be set up in some convenient place in every parish church; the clergy were not to discourage any from reading it, but were

[1] Probably Latimer means a good bishop in the neighbouring diocese of Hereford, vacant by the death of Fox; he got, as we have already said, Edmund Bonner as his neighbour, but happily was not long troubled with him.

[2] State Paper Office. *Ubi supra.*

[3] For the meaning of this, which has been often misunderstood, see Anderson's *Annals of the English Bible.*

"expressly to provoke and exhort every person to read the same." Sermons were to be preached once a quarter at least, "declaring the very Gospel of Christ," exhorting the hearers to works of charity, mercy, and faith, and discouraging pilgrimages, offering of candles, and kissing of relics as tending to idolatry and superstition. Moreover, all images to which pilgrimages and offerings were wont to be made, were to be summarily taken down, that they might no longer be an offence to God, and a danger to the souls of the King's subjects.

Much, indeed, remained still to be accomplished: there was urgent need of a further purification of the creed from Romish error; and many practices liable to superstitious abuse were still permitted and even sanctioned. But very much, also, had been effected; and with a free Bible everywhere within the reach of the people, good hope might be entertained of still further progress. That progress, as we shall presently see, was, for the rest of Henry's reign, checked and restrained; but the restraint was only for a time. Trial and persecution were perhaps wanted to give depth and solidity to the great work, just as the tree needs the rude shock of the wind, and the biting cold of winter, to strengthen its trunk and mature its growth; but in due season the result of what had been done became manifest, and a more complete Reformation was finally established as the religion of England.

Nothing is more to be deprecated in surveying the progress of the Reformation in this country than that narrow, censorious spirit, which recognises no merit in anything that is done, so long as anything else still remains undone. Ecclesiastical history is often, in this respect, more unjust than profane history has been; and splenetic historians have scarcely recognised the claims of Cromwell, Cranmer,

Latimer, and their fellow-labourers, to the gratitude of their countrymen, because they were slow in perceiving the errors of the system in which they had been educated, and only gradually arrived at a clear perception of the full import of the doctrines which they had adopted. The Apostles themselves were slow in comprehending the whole meaning of what they were taught: Jewish prejudices adhered to Peter, and had to be removed by express and repeated revelations; so long as the Temple stood, they probably all joined in its worship, though that had been abrogated by the coming of the true Lamb. And if the English Reformers were also slow in divesting themselves of old prejudices and ancient habits, it would ill become their descendants, who have profited by their honesty and their courage, to grudge them full praise and gratitude for what they did accomplish. Although, therefore, the Church of England, as it stood at the period of Cromwell's injunctions, was by no means, as yet, perfectly reformed, we shall gratefully acknowledge how much had been already done. It was in this spirit, contemporary Reformers on the Continent spoke of it, in the language of deep thankfulness to God for what had been effected, not of narrow censure for what had been omitted. "We all of us," says Bucer in a letter to Cranmer, in October, 1538,[1] "acknowledge how graciously England is dealt with, to whom alone it is given so far to recover itself in the midst of so many impediments. And we count you" [Cranmer, Fox, Latimer, and others] "altogether happy in the Lord, from whose labours has resulted such fruit. I am anxious to write these things that you might know that all the godly men, who have experience in ecclesiastical matters, consider the progress of the kingdom of Christ among you as most extensive, and your exertions to promote it ex-

[1] *Zurich Letters*, p. 525.

ceedingly successful; on which account they most joyfully praise and extol the mercy and goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ towards all of us, whom we pray both in your country and in ours to restore and establish everything that is yet to be desired."

We have already referred to one of the causes which led to Henry's withdrawing, at the close of his reign, from those principles in which he had hitherto walked slowly, perhaps, but steadily and consistently. The failure of the negotiations with the German Commissioners had unquestionably produced a feeling of irritation in his mind; he seemed to himself to have made so many concessions, that he was the more obstinately determined to stand by the few remaining Romish principles which he still retained. And, unfortunately, just at this critical period, the ablest of all the Roman Catholic prelates returned to England, after an absence of three years.[1] During these three years many important steps had been taken, and the Reformation had made very satisfactory progress; the Romish party being conspicuously inferior to their opponents, in the inability of their leaders to cope with such men as Cromwell, Cranmer, Latimer, and Fox. On Gardiner's return, however, they at last found a leader equal to their emergencies. Trained in the school of Wolsey, an accomplished diplomatist, an acute controversialist, a man of wonderful shrewdness and insight, of considerable learning, of immense capacity for public affairs, indefatigable, ingenious, subtle, unrelenting, inflexible in his hostility to the doctrines of the Reformers, his presence in England was the greatest external obstacle

[1] Historians in general, Protestant as well as Romish, have been utterly mistaken as to the period of Gardiner's return. But Christopher Anderson has ascertained from Gardiner's own account of his expenses [Cotton MSS., *Vespasian*], that he was abroad from October, 1535, to September 28, 1538.

to the further progress of the Reformation. He was not a favourite with Henry, who somewhat distrusted his honesty as a diplomatist, but his vast knowledge of Continental affairs made him indispensable to the King; no one better understood Henry's character; and, with a higher skill than the mere adulation of a courtier, he was able to use Henry's power and convictions for the promotion of his own views. His hand may be traced in much of the subsequent legislation of the reign; whatever is reactionary, whatever seems like an attempt to return to the old impossible position of Catholic orthodoxy *minus* a Pope, may, with little hesitation, be ascribed to the ability and influence of this great Popish champion. No one better understood than Cromwell what was involved in Gardiner's reappearance on the scene; it implied a personal struggle for superiority, from which, for the weaker party in the fight, not disgrace only but ruin and death might result. The course of this struggle to the death we shall have to mark in the sequel; but before many weeks elapse we shall find melancholy proofs of the presence and power of Gardiner in England.

Meantime, we shall return to Latimer and his cares. We have already heard of Mr. Wattwood and his disorderly proceedings at Warwick church; and Latimer's next letter shows that the unruly canon was now openly defying the authority of his diocesan.

"As touching Mr. Wattwood, you wot what you have to do; and I doubt not but will do as appertaineth thereunto: Whereas he was put up in my visitation for a lecher, a fighter, and a disquieter of his company, I cannot have him to answer thereunto. He beareth him very boldly of your lordship" [trusting to your lordship]; "and how much he regardeth my injunctions, your lordship may perceive by the testimony of all his company, whose letter I do send unto your lordship herein enclosed.[1] As for Master Wattwood, so that he be

[1] The enclosed letter has not been preserved.

reformed and I discharged" [relieved of all accusation], "I care not how little I have to do with him; saving only to pray for him that God would make him a good man. I write nothing of him but I dare avow it, with more. And I write it of no malice that I do bear him, but of good-will that I bear both to him and others. I desire you to be good lord to the college, and set you therein some good order, for it is not without need; for Master Wattwood, I ascertain you, is no meet man to do what he listeth. If he inform anything of me, as I know he can feign and lie to make for his purpose, I dare come to my answer. At Hartlebury, 2 October" [1538].[1]

The diocese of Worcester, it will be remembered, had long been held by non-resident Italian bishops; and the great towns, Bristol, Gloucester, and Worcester, had in consequence suffered from the want of the fostering care which an active prelate might be expected to exhibit. Latimer was anxious to make amends for the remissness of his predecessors; and the suppression of so many religious houses, filling the royal treasury, and placing lands at the disposal of the King and his ministers, seemed a favourable opportunity for securing some benefits to the long-neglected cities. This will explain his next letter.

"Sir,—I may marvel greatly that you do not blame me, but will take so patiently this my importunity. Well, to my purpose; for I must go on like myself. As for Bristol, sir, I am sure you will remember *in tempore*" [at the proper time] "of yourself, without me. Gloucester you have remembered already, by my occasion partly. Now Worcester is behind, an ancient and a poor city, and yet replenished with men of honesty, though not most wealthy; for by reason of their lady" [image of the Virgin, much esteemed and resorted to in pilgrimage] "they have been given to much idleness; but now that she is gone" [stripped, and found to be only a wooden bishop, and sent to Chelsea to be burnt], "they be turned to laboriousness, and so from ladyness to godliness. But, sir, this city is greatly charged with three things: their school, their bridge, and their wall. As for their school, it hath been maintained heretofore by a brotherhood,

[1] State Paper Office. *Ubi supra.*

called a gyld, I trow, not without some guile, popishly pardoning, and therefore now worthily decayed; so that I am fain myself, as poor as I am, to retain the schoolmaster there with my livery" [viz.], "meat and drink upon the holiday, and some part of his living beside, because he is honest, and bringeth up their youth after the best sort. And as for their bridge and their wall, as they be necessary for the city and the country both, so they be now not without great need of reparation, as I hear say.

"Wherefore, these premises considered, if the King's grace of his most gracious goodness, through your lordship's good advertisement, would vouchsafe to bestow the two friaries, Black and Grey, with their appurtenances upon this his poor ancient city, to the maintenance of the foresaid three things, so necessary for so many good purposes, *et illius majestas rem optimo rege dignam, et tua dominatio rem optimo consiliario non indignam procul dubio facerent*" [both his majesty would do a thing worthy of an excellent king, and your lordship would do a thing not unworthy of an excellent counsellor], "an honourable foundation, a comely commutation; popishness changed into holiness, beggars unbeggared to avoid beggary; *quæ sit mutatio dextræ Excelsi*" [such be the change made by the right hand of the Most High], "when lip-labouring of a few lewd friars should be turned into right praying of the whole city and town for the King's majesty, and all His Grace's posterity.

"Thus we commit our whole matter to your goodness, and you yourself to the goodness of God, long to continue to such good purposes.

"At Hartlebury, October 6 [1538].

"P.S.—And" [if] "your lordship would have thanked the King's grace's highness for my stag, in my name, I had been much bounden to you. I have made many merry in these parts, for I eat not all myself. God save the King!"[1]

We have already alluded to the existence in England of a number of Reformers more advanced in their theological opinions than Latimer and Cranmer. There were a few both among the clergy and laity who wished to proceed with more rapid steps, and who strongly dissented from the

[1] State Paper Office; printed not very correctly, in Latimer's *Remains*, p. 403.

doctrines of the *Articles* and the *Institution* in many important respects. These *Anabaptists* and *Sacramentaries*, as they were styled, began to attract the attention of the authorities in Church and State by their teaching; the one party mingling, as on the Continent, the opinions of the modern Baptists with certain vague, lawless notions, not easily compatible with any fixed form of government; the others denying the real presence, and maintaining those views on the holy communion which were generally received among the Swiss Reformers. On October 1, 1538, a commission was issued to Cranmer, Barnes, Crome, and some other divines, not, however, including Latimer, to try certain Anabaptist foreigners who had "lately come into the realm;" and one or two unfortunate men bore faggots at Paul's Cross, and two were consigned to the flames as heretics:[1] a grim, emphatic protest on Henry's part against his being identified with German opinions. A still more melancholy scene we shall presently be required to witness; meantime it appears from Latimer's next letter, that Bristol also contained some Sacramentaries, and that there were not wanting in that easily excitable city, men eager to inflict all the penalties of the law upon what was then esteemed a new form of heresy.

"Sir,—As touching John Scurfeld, the prisoner of Bristol, we have sent for him and examined him according to the tenor of your lordship's letters; and in process, after much ado with him, we perceive neither malice nor yet subtlety in him, but rather much simplicity and innocency, though his letters were written, as they seemed, very suspiciously. His delight was to have them punished which were bruited to deny the sacrament" [*i.e.*, the real corporal presence in the sacrament]; "and of that he had somewhat heard already, trusting to hear more, and so after his affection enlarged his pen at liberty" [wrote out of the fulness of his heart], "and so brought

[1] Anderson's *Annals*, vol. ii., p. 18.

himself into suspicion for lack of discretion, he being not yet nineteen years of age: but he hath been hampered therefore meetly well already, and is now re-carried again to Bristol, there to put in sureties, lacking such here, for his forthcoming whensoever upon any occasion any of the King's grace's council shall call for him. And after such sort, after much grating" [cross-questioning] "of him, and yet finding no other thing in him, we thought best to despatch him and to remit him. And so we now commit your good lordship most heartily to God.

"P.S.—This bearer, your orator, John Russell" [Sheriff of Worcestershire], "can tell your lordship how your lordship's letters might perfect the commonwealth about Tewkesbury. The same hath to thank your lordship, and I also for his sake, for your goodness towards him" [in granting some abbey lands]. "October 18, at Hartlebury."[1]

Another letter follows, of no public interest, except as contributing to fill up the picture of Latimer's episcopal life.

"Sir,—This bearer, Mr. Acton" [known to us before, related to Humphrey Monmouth], "is altogether yours, under the King's grace, to be where as your lordship shall think his service most necessary; but when he is above" [in London], "then we must lack him here beneath. He can tell you what proceedings be in our sessions, and how men be inclined either to justice or from. I can no more; but I pray God send the King's grace many such trusty servants in all parts of His Grace's realm. And God continue your life to the performance of all your good purposes. The prior of the Black Friars in Worcester, called Richard Edwards, when he surrendered up his house" [in August last], "was promised his capacity freely, both for himself and all his brethren. He is honest, as Mr. Acton can tell. I tolerate him in my diocese, trusting that you will extend your charity to him. October 19, at Hartlebury."[2]

A fortnight before this letter was written, on October 4, a commission was addressed to Latimer, in conjunction with three others, directing them to proceed to the monas-

[1] State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers.*
[2] State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers.*

tery of Hailes, and investigate the famous relic called the "Blood of Hailes," which was held in the greatest veneration all over the West of England. It was an eminently congenial occupation to one who had so often denounced pilgrimages and relics; and Latimer would enjoy the detection and exposure of the fraud which had vexed his soul years before, when he was poor parson of West Kington, and saw his parishioners trooping along the Foss-way to worship and offer before the venerated relic. Other matters are referred to in the next letter, but this exposure of the "Blood of Hailes" is the most interesting to us.

"And, sir, as to Master Wattwood" [already too well known to us for his disorderly conduct], "I have done according to the tenor of your lordship's letters; and yet at my next speaking with your lordship I will purge myself of his false accusation, as he himself hath confessed that he made untrue relation upon me in one thing.

"*Ad hæc*" [besides], "a certain man did write unto me alate these words, 'Friar Bartlow doth much hurt in Cornwall and in Devonshire; both with open preaching, and also with private communication.' If this be true, he hath some comfort from Rome I fear me, and I divine much, of Doctor Nicolas" [an Italian, conspicuous in opposing Henry's divorce case]; "a man with whom my fantasy never wrought withal.

"Now, Sir, this bearer, the Abbot of Evesham" [successor to the "Bloody Abbot," of a previous letter], "required me to make some mention of him, and to thank your good lordship for him, which I am bounden to do most heartily. And, sir, among many that your lordship hath done for, I think you shall find but few that will better remember, to his power, your beneficialness, than he will. Verily he seemeth to me a very civil and honest man; and one that putteth all his trust in your good lordship, that of your goodness, as you have begun with him and made him, so you will continue good lord unto him, to the maintaining of him in his right of such things which he hath obtained by your only goodness.

"Sir, we have been bolting and sifting the 'Blood of Hailes' all this forenoon. It was wonderously closely and craftily inclosed and stopped up, for taking of care. And it cleaveth fast to the bottom of the little glass that it is in. And verily it seemeth to be an unctuous

gum and compound of many things. It hath a certain unctuous moistness, and though it seem somewhat like blood when it is in the glass, yet when any parcel of the same is taken out, it turneth to a yellowness, and is cleaving like glue. But we have not yet examined all the monks; and therefore this my brother abbot" [Abbot of Worcester, one of the Commissioners] "shall tell your lordship what he hath seen and heard in this matter. And in the end your lordship shall know altogether. But we perceive not by your commission whether we shall send it up or leave it here, or certify thereof as we know. 28 Oct.: at Hailes."[1]

This miserable imposture, a few drops of yellowish gum like bird-lime, preserved in a small phial,[2] was shown to crowds of pilgrims as the very blood of Christ, some of those drops which had been shed on the cross for the redemption of the world; and they were told that the sight of it with the bodily eye conveyed assurance of eternal salvation. It was afterwards publicly held up to scorn by Hilsey at Paul's Cross; and those who had so long been duped by the cunning of the priests were invited to satisfy themselves that the so-called blood of Christ was nothing more than melted honey, coloured with saffron.

But we must now resume the narrative of the general course of events after Gardiner's return. We have already noticed the existence of Reformers who were bold enough to deny entirely that doctrine of transubstantiation, which was still the creed of the Church of England, and the belief even of Cranmer and Latimer. Reports, founded on the recent negociations with the German Commissioners, had been circulating in England, that even Henry had been gained over to the belief of the Swiss Reformers, or Sacramentaries. These reports were, of course, altogether groundless, and Henry naturally felt annoyed at what he

[1] State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers.*

[2] A more detailed account is given in the Official Report of the Commissioners, printed in Latimer's *Remains*, p. 407.

considered a grievous impeachment of his orthodoxy. Gardiner was acute enough to perceive his advantage, and suggested to the King that his honour required him to manifest his attachment to the old doctrine of transubstantiation, by inflicting the full penalties of the law upon some of those teachers who were openly impugning the real corporeal presence of Christ in the sacrament.

A victim was only too speedily found. Lambert, one of Bilney's converts, and an able and zealous Reformer, whom we have already seen before Latimer and Cranmer in 1536 for his opinions, was the unfortunate sufferer. He was present at a sermon in which Dr. Taylor, one of the three preachers appointed in Humphrey Monmouth's will, had defended the doctrine of the real presence against the Sacramentaries; and after sermon he spoke to the preacher, and offered in a courteous way to refute his doctrines. Taylor asked him to put his arguments in writing, and Lambert incautiously complied. The paper was shown to Barnes, who, with his former precipitancy, laid the matter formally before the Archbishop.[1] Lambert was again, therefore, summoned to Lambeth, to answer the charge of heretical teaching brought against him. According to the creed then sanctioned by law, and firmly held by all the leading Reformers, as well as by their opponents, his teaching was unquestionably heretical, and whatever might be Cranmer's reluctance, there was clearly no alternative: Lambert must either retract or be condemned as a heretic. Lambert, however, was not the man easily to abandon his principles; he defended his opinions with great ability, and, in the end, is said to have appealed to the King, deceived

[1] Latimer, it is said by some historians, was also present, but this is a mistake, a chronological confusion of two different occurrences; Latimer was then in his diocese. Barnes was hoping to get a living through Cranmer's influence.—Cranmer's *Letters*, p. 380.

probably by the reports then circulating that Henry was favourable to his views.[1] This was the very opportunity that Gardiner longed for. The King, he suggested, might now make it clear to all his subjects that these reports were groundless, and that whatever had been done in disowning the Pope, England was not yet to be the home of heretics. A royal commission summoned the bishops and nobles to London, where great preparations were made for a grand theological tournament, in which the orthodoxy and controversial prowess of Henry were to be displayed to the terror of all heretics and the joy of all true subjects. After some preliminary skirmishing, in a style that sufficiently indicated to Lambert the impossibility of his receiving a fair trial, the real debate began on the nature of the presence of Christ in the sacrament.

"Is the sacrament of the altar," asked Henry, lifting his cap as he spoke, "the body of Christ or not?" "After a certain manner," Lambert replied, "it is the body of Christ, as St. Augustine has said." "Answer me not out of St. Augustine," the King rejoined, "tell me plainly, is it the body of Christ or not?" Lambert, thus appealed to, denied that it was the body of Christ; and Henry, turning to Cranmer, bade the Archbishop proceed to refute the heresy. The primate argued with his customary gentle courtesy, yet seemed somewhat perplexed by Lambert's arguments, and by no means bore himself to Henry's satisfaction. Gardiner then struck in impetuously; and Tunstal and Stokesley, and other six bishops (*perhaps* including Latimer, though he is never specified), contributed their aid to overthrow the one solitary heretical champion. Lambert for some time defended himself nobly and skilfully, but

[1] These reports are alluded to frequently, *e.g.*, in Theobald's letter to Cromwell, October 22, 1538, printed in Ellis, series 3, vol. iii.

at length, worn out with speaking, he relinquished the useless task of refuting the same arguments over and over again, and listened in silence.

Henry concluded the debate as he had begun it: "What sayest thou now?" he asked, "after all the reasons of these learned men; art thou yet satisfied? Wilt thou live or die?"

"I yield myself wholly to your Majesty's will," was the reply.

"Commit thyself unto the hands of God," the King answered, "and not unto mine."

"My soul I do indeed commend unto God, but my body I submit wholly to your clemency."

Henry was not then in any mood for clemency, and he pronounced the fatal sentence, "If you commit yourself unto my judgment, you must die, for I will be no patron of heretics."

Four days after, on November 20, Lambert perished in the flames at Smithfield. His death, whether from design or from accident, was attended with circumstances of unusually barbarous suffering; but he was brave and steadfast to the end, expiring with these words on his lips, "None but Christ; none but Christ."[1]

This was a melancholy revival of those flames of persecution which had slumbered awhile. Well might Gardiner be elated with his triumph; he had not only committed Henry to a policy which was likely to retard the further progress of the Reformation, and to frustrate all hopes of an alliance with the German Protestants, but he had compelled the leaders of the English Reformation, Cromwell and Cranmer, to assist in the condemnation of one whom they all es-

[1] The narrative may be found at greater length in any of the chroniclers, all of whom, however, seem to have borrowed from Foxe.

teemed. Yet Lambert's death and his arguments were not in vain. Cranmer, who had been unconvinced by all the learned writings of the Continental Reformers against transubstantiation, was somewhat shaken by the arguments of Lambert, enforced as they were by his consistency and pious fortitude; and thus the martyr's courage and wisdom gave the first impulse to that change of opinion in the leading English Reformers, which at last compelled them to abandon the great stronghold of Popish doctrine—the Sacrifice of the Mass. To those who have carefully followed the course of this biography, it cannot be necessary to add any refutation of the reckless imputations against the honesty of Cranmer and Latimer in their proceedings concerning Lambert. To speak of Cranmer, as some have done, as "persecuting Lambert for doctrines which he himself professed as soon as it was safe to do so," is simply to say what is not true. History written in this fashion is the basest species of literature with which a language can be infested.

Having taken this decisive step, Henry proceeded to follow it up by issuing various injunctions and instructions defining the limits within which the creed of the subjects was to be restrained. Both the great religious parties were required to mould themselves according to the royal will; and both must have felt themselves aggrieved by the royal injunctions. On the very day of Lambert's trial a proclamation was issued, condemning the opinions of the Anabaptists and Sacramentaries, and forbidding any one unless learned in divinity to "dispute or argue upon the sacrament of the altar, on pain of losing life, goods, and chattels." The clergy were ordered in their sermons to set forth the glory of God and the truth of His most blessed Word; but at the same time they were to observe the customary ceremo-

nies, creeping to the cross on Good Friday, carrying candles on the Feast of Purification, holy water, consecrated bread, and similar rites and customs. Thomas-à-Becket was denounced as a rebel and not a saint, his images and pictures were to be destroyed, his name erased from all service-books, and his festivals for ever abrogated. The clergy were to be careful to declare the difference between things commanded by God, and the rites and ceremonies in the Church, lest the people should thereby grow into further superstition. On the other hand, a heavy blow was inflicted upon the Reforming party by the enactment that all married priests were to be deprived of their livings, and to be from thenceforth reputed lay persons. Thus, many of those customs so long associated with superstitious abuses were to be retained in full vigour; and Henry appeared more likely to retrace his steps, and restore something of what had been abolished, than to advance in the direction of a further reformation of religion.[1] There was not, indeed, much actual declension exhibited in the injunctions; but the royal authority, and all the strength of the royal character, were interposed as obstacles barring the way to all further progress. Gardiner conceived hopes of inducing the King to revive some of the ceremonies that had been abrogated; some of the Romish prelates were busily preparing a book of ceremonies for the instruction of the public mind; and, in short, the prospects of the Reformers were beginning to be somewhat clouded.

Latimer had been summoned with the other bishops to London to Lambert's trial; and on the evening of the trial he again writes to Cromwell:—

"If it be your pleasure to know with what kind of relics the 'Blood of Hailes' is accompanied, read this letter inclosed, and then

[1] See the injunctions, etc., in Foxe, v.; Burnet, iv. 396; vi. 220.

do as shall be seen unto your approved wisdom. The letter must return again to me to satisfy the writer's mind. If Master Nevell shall remove St. Kenelm" [chapel at Hailes], "then he shall find his shoe full for a relic.

"I would have waited upon your lordship myself, but that I must preach to-morrow for Master Manworth at Barking" [one of the sermons, perhaps, appointed by Humphrey Monmouth's will]. "I doubt not but your good lordship of your accustomed goodness doth remember Gloucester. The lady-abbess of Malling[1] hath instantly desired me to thank your good lordship for your goodness towards her. November 16" [1538].[2]

It was probably on one of these hurried expeditions to London that the incidents occurred which Strype and Latimer himself have related. He had travelled by Oxford, this being represented to him "as a gainer and fairer way;" and had remained all night in that ancient city. The talk of Oxford at the time was the recent execution of a traitor. "When the rope was about his neck," so Latimer repeated the story before King Edward, as an illustration of the unsearchable deceitfulness of the human heart, "no man could persuade him that he was in any fault, and stood there a great while in the protestation of his innocency. They hanged him, and cut him down somewhat too soon, afore he was clean dead, then they drew him to the fire, and he revived, and then he coming to his remembrance confessed his fault, and said he was guilty."[3] On the morning after his arrival in Oxford he attended the lecture on Divinity; and Smith, the lecturer, a Romanist, but a time-server, "laid aside his ordinary reading, and for that day read out of the fifth chapter to the Romans, urging most earnestly the doctrine of justification by faith." Latimer was agreeably surprised to hear such opinions taught

[1] The abbey of Malling, in Kent, was surrendered October 29, 1538; the abbess was Margaret Vernon.—*Letters on the Suppression of the Monasteries.*

[2] State Paper Office.

[3] Latimer's *Sermons.*

by one whom he believed to be a determined opponent of the Reformation, and promised to recommend him for promotion. Next day, when Latimer had left for his diocese, the shameless lecturer revoked what he had taught, saying he had taught it because "he was astonished at the presence of so great a man," and entreated his hearers to excuse him on the score of *youth*, though his grey hair belied his excuse. He was one of those who disputed subsequently against Latimer at Oxford.[1]

On returning to his diocese, Latimer resumed again his correspondence with Cromwell, the subject of the suppression of the monasteries naturally engaging much of his attention, and forming a frequent theme in his letters. The following letter has been frequently printed:—

"Sir,—I have to thank your good lordship for many things; and now alate for your singular goodness shewed, as I understand, to Master Lucy, a very good gentleman; and also towards Master Acton, another of the same sort; but of this my duty more at more leisure. And yet this much now will I say, and not say it alone, but with many, that your lordship, one man, have promoted many more honest men since God promoted you, than hath many men done before your time, though in like authority with you; *tanquam non tibi natus soli, sed multorum commodo. Efficiat, qui omnia fecit, ut in eundem finem diutissime vivat dominatio tua, ut sic inter nobiles nobilissimus evadas. Quod quidem nihil esse possit nobilius quam bonos viros evehere, malos autem reprimere; id quod tibi hactenus usu venit, plus omnibus facere*" [as born not for yourself only but for the good of many. May God, who does all things, grant that your lordship may long live for the same purpose, that so you may be the noblest of the noble. For, indeed, nothing can be more noble than to advance good men, and to restrain bad, which you have hitherto been wont to do more than all others have done.]

"But now, sir, another thing that, by your favour, I might be a motioner unto you, at the request of an honest man, the Prior of Great Malvern" [Richard Bedyll], "*in* my diocese, though not *of* my

[1] Strype, *Eccl. Mem.* ii. 1, 70, etc.

diocese" [being exempt, and subject to the Abbot of Westminster]; "referring the success of the whole matter to your only approved wisdom and benign goodness, in any case: for I do know that I do play the fool, but yet with my foolishness I somewhat quiet an unquiet man, and mitigate his heaviness: which I am bold to do with you, for that I know, by experience, your goodness, that you will bear with fools in their frailness. This man both heareth and feareth, as he saith, the suppression of his house; which, though he will be conformable in all points to the King's highness' pleasure and yours, once known, as both I advertised him, and also his bounden duty is to be; yet nevertheless, if he thought his enterprise would not be mistaken, nor turn to any displeasure, he would be an humble suitor to your lordship, and, by the same, to the King's good grace, for the upstanding of his foresaid house, and continuance of the same to many good purposes. Not in monkery; he meaneth not so, God forbid! but any other ways as should be thought and seem good to the King's majesty; as to maintain teaching, preaching, study, with praying, and, to the which he is much given, good housekeeping: for to the virtue of hospitality he hath been greatly inclined from his beginning, and is very much commended in these parts for the same. So, if five hundred marks to the King's highness, with two hundred marks to yourself for your goodwill,[1] might occasion the promotion of his intent, at least way for the time of his life, he doubteth not to make his friends for the same, if so little could bring so much to pass. The man is old, a good housekeeper, feedeth many, and that daily; for the country is poor and full of penury. And alas! my good lord, shall we not see two or three" [abbeys] "in every shire changed to such remedy? Thus, too, this honest man's importunity hath brought me beyond my duty; saving for the confidence and trust that I have always in your benignity. As he hath knowledge from you, so he will prepare for you, ever obedient to your advertisement. Sir William Kingston" [Lieutenant of the Tower] "can make report of the man.

"God prosper you to the uttering of all hollow hearts! Blessed be the God of England, that worketh all, whose instrument you be! I heard you say once, after you had seen that furious invective of Cardinal Pole" [against the King], "that you would make him to eat

[1] We see here something of the base measures connected with the suppression of the monasteries. The money here offered was, of course, a bribe.

his own heart, which you have now, I trow, brought to pass; for he must now eat his own heart, and be as heartless as he is graceless.
"December 13" [1538]. "Hartlebury."[1]

The allusion to Cardinal Pole at the close of this letter reminds us of another phase in the shifting and perplexed political situation of the time. Henry had been, all the year, soliciting a matrimonial alliance with the Emperor or the King of France, and they had amused him with hollow negotiations which in the end proved fruitless. Nothing could have been more favourable to the interests of the Romish party in England than such an alliance; but strange to say its most violent opponents were the Pope and Cardinal Pole. With that short-sighted desire of revenge which had so often in those days seduced the Court of Rome from its usual wary policy, the Pope sent the Cardinal into Spain to stimulate the Emperor to invade England; and with futile rage he discharged against Henry that once-dreaded thunderbolt of excommunication which had been held *in terrorem* over his head since 1535. Henry, on his part, made an emphatic practical reply: he ordered the brothers and friends of Pole to be arrested and committed to the Tower, there to remain till the Peers could be summoned to try them for treason. This was doubtless the step alluded to by Latimer, as what was likely to make Pole eat his own heart.

Latimer was now preparing to spend his fourth Christmas at Hartlebury, little dreaming that it was to be the last of his episcopate. His customary audit was of course held at Christmas, and he, fortunately, felt impelled to write to Cromwell the exact state of his affairs. This curious document furnishes us with a full account of his stewardship so far as money matters are concerned, and affords us an

[1] Cotton MSS., *Cleopatra* E. iv. 264.

interesting glimpse into the domestic economy of an episcopal palace in the sixteenth century.

"Sir, to be short with you, and not to trouble you, this is now my state, and in this condition I am. All manner of my receipts, since I was bishop, amounts to four thousand pounds and upward. My first-fruits, reparations" [repairs], "and solutions of my debts amounts to just seventeen hundred pounds,[1] there remaineth in ready money now at my last audit, ending upon Christmas even's even, nine score pounds; of the which five score pound and five is payable forth withal, for my tenths of this year, other twenty goeth to my new year's gift, and so have I left to myself, to keep my Christmas withal, and to come up withal" [to London] "three score pounds. All the rest is spent: if well, that is my duty; if otherwise, that is my folly. As any man may complain, I must make answer; else, God knoweth all. It is spent, I say, saving that I have provision for household, in wheat, malt, beeves, and muttons, as much as would sustain my house this half-year and more, if I should not go forth of my diocese: and in this standeth much the stay of my house; for I am more inclined to feed many grossly and necessarily" [with the mere necessaries of life], "than a few deliciously and voluptuously. As for plate and hangings, hath not cost me twenty shillings" [for this bishop is not fond of pomp]. "In plate, my new year's gifts doth my need, with glass and byrral; and I delight more to feed hungry bellies than to clothe dead walls. Thus it is, my lord, therefore you may me credit; and as you have been always my good lord, so I desire you to continue, and to take this rude signification of my condition for a new year's gift, and a poor token of my good will toward you, for this time. Another year, and I live" [and continue bishop], "it shall be better; for I thank my Lord God, I am within forty pounds out of debt, which doth lighten my heart not a little.[2] And shortly cometh on my half-year's rent; and then I shall be afloat again, and come clean out of debt.

"Sir, my brother and suffragan, the Prior of Worcester" [Holbeach, suffragan Bishop of Bristol], "is your orator, and beadsman, if it be your pleasure that he shall preach before the King's highness, this

[1] The reader may be again reminded that the present value of all the sums here mentioned is found by multiplying by *fifteen*.

[2] Latimer's debts were probably connected with his elevation to the bishopric, and with unavoidable expenses incident to his office.

Lent coming; his day once appointed, he will be at your commandment, but now it were time to know his day.

"*Sub natalem Christi.*" [Dec. 24, 1538]. "At Hartlebury."[1]

Notwithstanding his large revenues, therefore, Latimer had not accumulated any fortune during his episcopate. He had, at his elevation, been called upon to pay large sums as first-fruits and for dilapidations, and at Christmas, 1538, he had not yet entirely repaid the debts thereby incurred. His Lady-day rents would set him free from debt, without, however, leaving him any considerable surplus; and at the period of his resignation he was probably left almost moneyless, not having profited in any pecuniary sense by his four years' tenure of his wealthy See.

1539.

This year, destined to prove for a time so hostile to the interests of the Reformation, and to cut short prematurely Latimer's career of public usefulness, seemed to promise favourably at its commencement. The misjudged policy of the Court of Rome, and the bad faith of the Emperor Charles had produced a reaction in Henry's mind; and he made overtures for resuming negotiations with the German Protestants. Envoys were accordingly sent over to Germany, to the Elector of Saxony, and the Landgrave of Hesse, with assurances of Henry's continued goodwill and earnest desire for promoting the purity of the Churches.[2] Along with this negotiation for a fresh alliance between the Church of England and the German Reformers, there was now prosecuted for the first time a definite proposal for a marriage between Henry and one of the Protestant Princesses. Cromwell, it is usually said, though not upon sufficient authority, suggested to Henry

[1] State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers*, C. 3. 21.
[2] Strype, *Eccl. Mem.* vol. i. pt. 2. p. 395.

that Anne, second daughter of the Duke of Cleves, was in beauty and virtue, worthy to be Queen of England. There can be no doubt that, from whatever quarter the proposal for this marriage came, it would be hailed with satisfaction by the English Protestants: and it is certain that by the middle of March, Henry was actively prosecuting his suit, and that he was even then anxiously waiting for some authentic portrait which might enable him with his own eyes to judge of the charms of a princess who was reported to be "as well for the beauty of the face as for the whole body, above all other ladies excellent."[1]

To the other negotiation, for a closer alliance between the churches, Henry had interposed an additional obstacle by a proclamation issued on February 26, 1539, in which he again charged all his loving subjects to observe and keep the ancient ceremonies. All bishops, deans, curates and preachers were carefully to explain the true use of the ceremonies; that water was sprinkled every Sunday to remind them of their baptism, and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ for their redemption on the cross; that giving of holy bread reminded them of their unity, that all Christian men were one body, just as the bread is composed of many grains; that candles were carried at Candlemas to remind them of Christ, the true light of the world; that the giving of ashes on Ash-Wednesday reminded them that men are but dust and ashes, and that penance was suitable in Lent; that the palms on Palm Sunday should bring to mind Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem; that creeping to the cross on Good Friday taught them to humble themselves before the cross. These ceremonies, it was added by way of doctrinal safeguard, were not the workers of our salvation, but only outward

[1] Cotton, MSS., *Vitellius*: quoted in Anderson's *Annals*, ii. 51.

signs whereby men remembered Christ and His work and passion, whence alone all good men received salvation: still all men were to observe them, until they were altered or abolished. No one was to despise them; no one was to use them superstitiously.[1] In other words, ceremonies which, all experience showed, had invariably led to superstition, especially among the more ignorant, were rigorously enjoined; and Henry was sanguine enough to hope that a bare caution, or admonitory explanation, given often by a superstitious priest, would sufficiently guard his subjects against the imminent danger of relapsing into their old ignorance and superstition.

In resuming their negotiations, the German Commissioners remonstrated courteously but firmly with Henry against this impolitic and unscriptural "confirmation of certain vicious or unprofitable rites." They reminded him that these ceremonies were inconsistent with the articles of the common creed to which both Churches assented, that they offended the light of the Gospel, that they deterred the weak from the pure doctrine, and proposed other worship than that delivered by God.[2] Melanchthon also wrote and warned him that the continued use of these ceremonies was likely to restore again the reverence for the Pope, by whose authority they had been originally introduced into the Church; and recommended that instead of compelling their use, Henry should allow liberty of opinion and action in matters that were non-essential; adding a special condemnation of the royal injunctions on the celibacy of the clergy, as quite certain to corrupt public morals.[3] Cromwell also, as far as he dared, for the

[1] Wilkins' *Concilia*, iii. 842: from Cotton MSS., *Titus*.

[2] Elector of Saxony's letter to Henry, April 4: Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, vol. i. pt. 2, 399.

[3] Melanchthon to Henry, April 1: Burnet, iv. 347.

presence of Gardiner rendered him very cautious, suggested to his sovereign that the recommendations of the Germans were weighty and just.[1]

Henry's chief object in issuing his injunctions and proclamations, had always been to put an end to the great division of opinion on religious matters which agitated the minds of his subjects, and to produce concord and agreement. But it need not be said, that the methods he adopted to promote unity only increased division; religious controversy waxed fiercer than ever; the ceremonies, the celibacy of the clergy, and the real presence in the Holy Communion, being the chief points on which men were divided from each other. Unfortunately, nothing could move Henry from the position he had taken up; all the arguments that were brought to bear against him could not convince him; and this part of the negotiations, which might have been productive of innumerable blessings to England, speedily proved utterly abortive. The other part of the negotiations went on more prosperously, and was at last brought to a conclusion; but, unhappily, their success proved almost as disastrous to the English Reformers in this matrimonial alliance, as their failure in the hopes of a religious union.

But before prosecuting this subject further, it will be necessary to return to Latimer, and resume his history, illustrating it with the remaining letters to Cromwell, which unhappily will soon begin to fail us. Latimer seems to have remained at Hartlebury, till he was summoned to the Parliament in London, busied as before with the many practical details of his diocese, and occasionally compelled to ask advice from Cromwell. In the middle of January he writes as follows, on a variety of subjects:—

[1] Cromwell to Henry, April 23: Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, vol. i., pt. 2, 400.

"Sir, I doubt not but the King's highness, of his gracious and accustomable goodness, will remember his poor subjects now in Lent as touching white meat, of the which I now motion unto your lordship, to the intent it may come betime among them; for heretofore it hath been Midlent as ever it hath come to the borders of the realm." [Lent began this year on February 19].[1] "This Master Lucy" [bearer of the letter] "shall be now a great piece of my letters unto you: I trust you will give to him the hearing as you may have leisure.

"Sir, I like not those honey-mouthed men, when I do see no acts nor deeds according to their words. Master Anthony Barker" [of whom we heard in October, 1537] "had never had the wardenship of Stratford" [collegiate church] "at my hands, saving at contemplation of your lordship's letter. I am sure your lordship can bolt out what should be meant by such instructions as Master Anthony Barker gave to his parish priest, whose voluntary confession without any provocation of me, I do send unto your lordship, written with his own hand, his own name subscribed: Mr. Lucy with all my house being at the publishing of the same.[2]

"Sir, I ascertain" [assure] "you before God, that I never presented anymatter unto you, of any malice or ill-will to any person, but only of good zeal to the truth and discharging of my duty. And as for the Arches" [the Court of Arches], "I could have had fewer matters there, with more money in my purse by not a little, if I would have followed the old trade in selling of sin, and not doing of my duty.

"I do send unto your lordship also a copy of Master Anthony Barker's parish priest's recantation or revocation, which shall be done upon Sunday next, at Stratford, one of my chaplains being there to preach and he (? hear) the same.

"Sir, our master sheriff" [Sir Gilbert Talbot] "hath kept such a sessions at Worcester, as hath not been seen here these many years. Sir, to be master of the game in the forest of Fecknam, is to be leader of many men. It were meet that he that should be leader of many men, should have a true faithful heart to his sovereign lord. In that point you know our sheriff; he dwelleth within four miles of Fecknam. January 17, Hartlebury."[3]

[1] According to Foxe, v. 384, it was Cromwell who had obtained permission for the poor to eat eggs and white meat in Lent.

[2] This confession is not now amongst Latimer's papers in the State Paper Office.

[3] State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers*, C. 3. 21. p. 526.

The very next day Latimer despatched another letter to Cromwell by the hand of one of the King's servants.

"Sir, I pray you give this bearer, my fellow Moore, the King's servant, the hearing of a matter which I have charged him to open to your lordship, even as he did open it to me. Your lordship shall perceive what conveyance there is by night. It were meet to know to what purpose. If your lordship return my fellow, with your letters of commission to master sheriff and me, to examine the parties, we shall lack no good will to do our best. Some words, meseemeth, soundeth not well toward the King" [*i.e.*, were treasonable]. "I refer all to your high wisdom. This bearer, Moore, seemeth to me an honest man: one word of your lordship's mouth might occasion Master Captain[1] to be his good master, and something better than he is" [get him some advancement], "as this man doth say. God forbid that this poor man should forego his right! my counsel hath seen his writings" [title deeds, &c.], "and they think that he is debarred of right. Your good lordship may ease all with one word. It hangeth betwixt Sir John Ashley and him.

"Sir, Mr. Tracy, your lordship doth know what manner of man he is; I would wish there were many of that sort. He had a lease of the demesnes of Winchcombe" [abbey], "as other more had. The others have theirs renewed without a condition; if you would of your goodness write to the abbot and convent, that he might have his renewed again, without a condition, your lordship should do an act not unworthy yourself. He is given to good hospitality, and hath need of such things for the maintenance of the same: and he is always ready to serve the King in commissions and other ways, with most hearty fare, according to his duty, letting for no costs nor charge at any time.

"Sir, I know that I am a bold fool: but till you rebuke me for the same, I must needs be malapert with you for such honest men. God be with you, and I pray God preserve you *ad promotionem bonorum, vindictam malorum*" [for the promotion of good men, the punishment of bad]. "January 18, Hartlebury."[2]

Of Latimer's proceedings, in the months of February

[1] The word is not easily decipherable, and may be a proper name. It has been suggested that it was Wingfield, captain of the royal guard, that was meant here.

[2] State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers*, C. 3. 21. p. 502.

and March, no record whatever exists; we are left to suppose that these months were filled with the same cares and varied anxieties which he has himself so well portrayed for us in his interesting correspondence with Cromwell. They were the last months spent in his pleasant country residence, the last months of freedom and public usefulness that he was to enjoy while Henry filled the throne. The controversies that were agitating the public mind were of course profoundly interesting to him; and were discussed by him and his chaplains, we have little doubt, with eagerness not unmingled with anxiety. Opposed as he was to changes, and firmly as he still adhered to the doctrine of transubstantiation, no one knew better the danger of encouraging superstition, by retaining practices which had so often been abused; and no one regretted more than he that mistaken piety which preferred what was frequently "an unholy and unchaste chastity to chaste and holy matrimony." One solitary positive notice of him during these months has been preserved. John Butler and three other pious English youths, writing a conjoint letter to Bullinger and Bibliander, on March 8, incidentally state that a letter from Bibliander, one of the most learned of the Swiss Divines, had been delivered to the Bishop of Worcester, and that he would probably send an answer.[1] Whether Latimer replied or not is uncertain; none of his letters to the Swiss Reformers have been preserved; but it is interesting to know that he was thus early in communication with the pious and learned men of the Continent: he needed this intercourse with other more logical minds, in order to give greater maturity and precision to his own theological opinions.

Early in March summonses were issued for the meeting

[1] *Zurich Letters*, vol. ii. p. 626.

of Parliament and Convocation, after a prorogation of nearly three years; and towards the close of the month Latimer would be commencing his preparations for his last visit to London as Bishop. Before leaving, or perhaps on his way, he had gone to Sutton Park, near Tenbury, the seat of his friend Richard Acton, who had married the niece of Humphrey Monmouth, and there he wrote his next letter to Cromwell, referring for the last time to the conduct of Mr. Wattwood, of whom we have so often heard him make grievous complaints, but who had now wonderfully reformed.

"Sir, you be indeed *scius artifex*" [a skilful workman], "and hath a good hand to renew old bottles, and to polish them and make them apt to receive new wine. I pray you, keep your hand in use" [in practice], "and to the intent your lordship may perceive what a work you have wrought upon this man, Mr. Wattwood, I do send unto you Mr. Bennett's letter, my chaplain, testifying what good change and renovation he perceiveth in him, of the which I am very glad. And so, I am sure, your good lordship will be also, and the rather for that he is your own workmanship, under God, to whom be all honour and glory. 2 April, at Sutton."[1]

The next letter to Cromwell, written a fortnight later, has very considerably perplexed previous biographers; yet, perhaps, viewed in the light of the great religious controversies which then agitated England, we may find it by no means so totally obscure as has been fancied. It is written from Strownd, which has been conjectured to be Latimer's way of spelling Stroudend, in Painswick, Gloucestershire, a manor belonging to Cromwell; but

[1] State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers*, C. 3, 21, p. 416. The letter from Bennet is enclosed, and states that Wattwood was now an honest new man, who showed more gentleness than all the rest of the clergy at Warwick Church, "setting forth and following" the King's injunctions and Latimer's with all diligence; in short he had become quite an exemplary personage, deserving of being furthered in all his lawful suits.

which may also be, with perhaps greater probability, taken to mean Strond, the official residence of Latimer in London.

"Sir. As touching you wot what, I have written again, guessing at your advice; I trust not far wide. But yet pity it is to see God so dishonoured, and no remedy provided, at leastway that God hath provided; not free to be used, but the vengeance of God more and more to be provoked, *when comperites*" [revelations, official disclosures] "*doth shew what fedities*" [base practices] "*doth grow*. Now, sir, if you be listy to hear of Furnes fools" [fools at Furness in Lancashire], "this simple priest can tell you the state of those parts; he hath come far to shew you his grief; a world to know how pardoners doth prate on the borders of the realm.[1] If you help not that men of both learning and judgment be resident there, they shall perish in their ignorance.

"God send you well again to us, for without you we shall make no end. *Postridie Benedicti*, at Strownd." [April 15, 1539.][2]

The subject so obscurely alluded to in this letter, seems in all probability to have been that which the German Commissioners with Melanchthon and Cranmer were all so eagerly discussing, namely, Henry's apparent determination to enforce the celibacy of the clergy. For several years this had been practically in abeyance, and many priests had married; Cranmer himself was at the time a married man; and Henry's determination, as set forth in his injunctions, to punish all married clergy, had occasioned the utmost consternation amongst the Reformers both in England and Germany. To enforce celibacy, as experience had abundantly shown, was to expose the clergy to temptations which all could not withstand; temptations for which God had indeed provided a remedy

[1] The North was still much inclined to Popery: and just at this time satirical ballads against Henry were freely circulating there to his great annoyance.—*State Papers*, v. 145.

[2] State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers*, C. 3, 21, p. 494: in April, 1539, Cromwell was ill with ague. Strype, i. 2, 404.

in marriage, but for which no other remedy could be provided but such as would, in Latimer's words, "more and more provoke the vengeance of God." It was feared that the coming Parliament might only give additional strength to the royal injunctions on this point, and in spite of the many disclosures of monastic and clerical immorality, might subject the clergy to a bondage which was sure to issue in the dishonouring of God. This, therefore, it is conjectured, was the subject on which Latimer and Cromwell had already been communicating with each other, and to which this somewhat obscure letter refers.

The only remaining letter of Latimer to Cromwell belongs manifestly to the same period, and may be given here, so as not to interrupt the continuity of the succeeding part of the biography.

"Sir, I have to thank your good lordship for many things; but I will not now trouble your better business therewith, but shall pray to God to reward you for all together. And now, sir, your good lordship hath begun right graciously with the school of Gloucester; if of your goodness you would now make an end, your perseverance cannot be unrewarded. If the King's highness doth use to sell of such lands as hath been belonging to monasteries. Lady Cooke, foundress of the school, would give after twenty years' purchase for a parcel which lieth near unto the town, and was belonging to Llanthony" [abbey]. "This bill enclosed doth specify the value, and I did send this bearer, Mr. Garrett,[1] my chaplain, to speak with Lady Cooke, and to know further of the same, and to certify your lordship of the same. But I refer all to your known both wisdom and goodness; and upon your pleasure known herein Lady Cooke shall make ready thereunto.

"As to my nurse" [old Mrs. Statham], "I say no more; but if your good lordship do remember her friendly, she both will and shall remember your good lordship again accordingly. But I will go no further, neither in this suit, nor yet in no other, but as I

[1] We have heard of him before at Oxford, and shall see him again.

shall perceive your lordship agreeable to hear the same. Thus God preserve you in long life to the finishing of many things well begun, and to the performance of many things yet imperfect." [1]

With this letter, which may be referred in all probability to April or May, 1539, Latimer's extant correspondence closes, and we have to pursue our narrative hereafter without that aid which has been for some years of his life so invaluable.

In those days Parliament never assembled merely as a matter of course, but only for the dispatch of business of serious importance. Both the great religious parties looked forward to the legislation of the coming Parliament with the greatest interest; the Reformers were anxious to remove many of the obnoxious ceremonies, to restore to the clergy the liberty of marriage, and in general to break down as far as possible the remaining peculiarities that separated the Church of England from the Continental Protestants; the Romish party were equally determined to retain what yet survived of the old faith and the old traditions, as the only link that associated them with that past to which they looked back with such fond regret, and the only possible hope of the restoration of England to its former condition. All parties, therefore, were animated with the resolution of men who knew that they were to join in mortal strife for objects of the highest moment, who felt that their faith, and perhaps their lives, would be influenced by the result of their deliberations.

Parliament assembled on Monday, April 28, and Convocation met in St. Paul's on Friday, May 2. The

[1] State Paper Office: *Chapter House Papers*, C. 3, 21, p. 528: the letter referred to is also preserved, setting forth the lady's desire to purchase "from our sovereign lord the King a farm belonging to the priory of Llanthony, lately surrendered," in order to endow the free school in Gloucester, in accordance with her husband's will.

great object in which Henry wished them to co-operate with him was still the same that he had been prosecuting for so many years, the discovery of some method for securing unity of opinion in religious matters: a noble object, indeed, though Henry did not pursue it very wisely; a devout aim, though never very easy of accomplishment, and, least of all, in such days of change and excitement. In spite of articles and injunctions, carefully framed to promote religious unity, Henry had found to his mortification that division and discord prevailed among his subjects as extensively as ever. There were apparently *three* great religious parties in the nation. On the one extreme was the old Popish party, who utterly disapproved of all the steps that had been taken since the royal divorce was first mooted, in 1526; a party well described by Henry as "by their preachings and teachings minded craftily to restore in this realm the old devotion to the usurped power of the Bishop of Rome, the hypocrite's religion, superstitions, pilgrimages, idolatry, and other evil and naughty ceremonies and dreams, justly and lawfully abolished and taken away by authority of God's word."[1] On the other extreme was a mixed party, including all the more advanced Reformers; those who were styled Sacramentaries, in the phraseology of that age, as well as the Anabaptists and others who maintained extreme opinions on theological and political subjects; a body described by Henry, not very justly, as "wrestling and interpreting Holy Scriptures, so as to subvert and overturn the sacraments of the Holy Church" [in the Romish sense], "the power and authority of princes and magistrates, and, generally, all laws and common justice, and the good and laudable ordinances and ceremonies

[1] *Proclamation for an Uniformity in Religion*, issued 1539, in Strype. *Eccl. Mem.*, Vol. i., pt. 2, No. 110. From *Cleopatra* E. V.

necessary and convenient to be used and continued in this realm." And between these extreme parties moved a large and miscellaneous body, including the great majority of the population; a body that had hitherto followed Henry's lead, and was nominally one, but which, embracing as it did Latimer and Cranmer on the one side, Gardiner and Tunstal on the other, had no real unity of belief or purpose, and was daily manifesting imminent symptoms of a tendency to be resolved into two opposite factions, which would naturally ally themselves with one or other of the extreme parties. To guide a nation, torn by such wide divergence of opinion in religion, and to mould all parties into one common faith and worship, was no easy task. Modern rulers have long abandoned it as impracticable, and, perhaps, even sinful; but Henry deemed it the most important "part of his kingly office and charge, to reduce the people, committed by God to his charge, to unity of opinion," and he "daily, painfully, studied and devised means for accomplishing it." Hitherto he had not, indeed, been very successful, but he did not yet despair of discovering some articles of agreement by which his great object might at length be accomplished.

On May 5, therefore, exactly a week after the reassembling of Parliament, it was proposed that a committee of nine, chosen from the opposite parties, should meet in St. Paul's, and, after mature discussion, devise some common bond of unity and religious harmony. On the one side were Cromwell, Cranmer, Latimer, and Goodrich (Bishop of Ely); on the other, Lee (Archbishop of York), Tunstal, Aldrich, Clark, and Salcot (Bishops of Carlisle, Bath, and Bangor). The debates of the Commissioners are lost; but the preponderance of ability, from the composition of the commission, would naturally be on

the side of the party in favour of Reformation ; while their opponents, by way of counterbalance, had a numerical majority. The result was what might have been anticipated ; on every subject discussed the Commissioners were divided in opinion, and it soon became evident that from them no articles of agreement could possibly emanate. After a fortnight thus spent in debate, without any hope of promoting union, Henry removed the question to the decision of another tribunal. Cromwell's influence was somewhat on the wane, and the Duke of Norfolk was commissioned to ask the opinion of the House of Lords on six important topics, on which differences most widely prevailed. These six topics related to—the manner of the presence of Christ in the sacrament, communion in one kind, the benefit of private masses, celibacy of the clergy, auricular confession, and the continued obligation of monastic vows ; subjects evidently of prime consequence, constituting then as now some of the most salient differences between the Reformed Church and the Church of Rome. The debates were long and earnest ; Henry himself, always zealously sharing in a theological controversy, came to the House,[1] and joined in the discussions. Latimer, Shaxton, and others advocated the views which the Reformers were all beginning to entertain on the points proposed, while Gardiner, Lee, Tunstal, and Stokesley maintained the old teaching of the Church. There was no doubt of the conclusion at which Henry wished them to arrive, and it was clear to all that the King was determined to carry his point ; yet, when every other voice was silenced, Cranmer continued to argue and protest, and to cite Scripture and the Fathers against the royal measures. The nobles, however, to a man, with that

[1] Henry was present May 19 and May 21.—*Lords' Journals.*

inexplicable tameness which characterised their proceedings during this reign, acquiesced in Henry's wishes; the Commons, too, though with some greater show of opposition (one of the members in particular, Thomas Brook, arguing so ably against it, that Cromwell entreated him to desist, unless he wished to be hanged or burned),[1] at last passed the Bill, and on June 28 it received the royal assent, and became part of the law of the land; entitled, in the Statute-Book, "An Act for abolishing diversity of opinions" (31 Henry VIII. c. 14), but better known to the English people as "The Bloody Statute," or, "The whip with six cords." The passing of this famous Act was unquestionably a serious discouragement to the great Protestant party; and as it speedily filled the jails and sent fresh victims to Smithfield, it cannot be considered as an effectual device for "securing unity of opinion, and increasing love and charity among the people." We shall again return to the "Bloody Statute;" meantime, it may here be noticed that the Romish party did not escape without some defeats to tarnish the glory of their great triumph. For the Parliament, completing the legislation of former years, passed an Act for formally vesting in the Crown the property of all monastic establishments which had been, or might hereafter be, suppressed. No very valid reasons were assigned for a measure so sweeping, though it was evidently a subject admitting of much argument on both sides. Latimer's views, on this matter of retaining monasteries, we have already repeatedly seen; Cranmer, however, was decidedly in favour of sweeping them all away, as only fostering superstition and immoral abuses.[2] On Henry's

[1] See Brook's speech in Foxe, v. 503: well worth reading.
[2] See his arguments in the *Homily on Good Works.*

part there can be little doubt that there was no higher motive for suppressing the monasteries than the imperative necessity of replenishing his exhausted treasury. Property, of an enormous annual value, together with jewels, gold and silver plate, and other valuables, estimated to amount to nearly three millions of our money, was thus transferred to the royal coffers; and, in return, Henry undertook to erect and endow thirteen additional bishoprics, and to relieve his subjects, in all time to come, from subsidies and other burdens. His promises were very indifferently kept; the treasures were soon dissipated among a host of greedy, pilfering courtiers, or spent by the extravagant and gambling monarch; only six bishoprics were endowed, and, within a year, Parliament was solicited for larger grants of money than had ever been asked before.

Nor was this the only blow inflicted on the Romish party. After Parliament was prorogued, a royal proclamation was issued, forbidding men to apply the epithets papist and heretic under penalties, and, what must have been a grievous disappointment to Gardiner, declaring that the King was "pleased and contented, that such as could read, might read the Scriptures in the English tongue, at all times and places convenient, for their own instruction and edification, to increase, thereby, godliness and virtuous learning, and to bring them from their old ignorance and blindness." A book of ceremonies, also, presented to Convocation by the Romish party, with the hope of retaining all that was still left of the ancient ceremonial, and, possibly, of reviving some that had been abolished, was successfully opposed by Cranmer, and was rejected.

To return to the "Six Articles;" they were briefly as follows:—

1. "In the sacrament of the altar, after the consecration, there remains no substance of bread and wine, but under the form of bread and wine there is present the natural body and blood of Jesus Christ, conceived of the Virgin Mary.

2. "Communion, in both kinds, is not necessary to salvation by the law of God.

3. "Priests, after being ordained, may not marry by the law of God.

4. "Vows of chastity ought to be observed by the law of God.

5. "Private masses, as agreeable to God's law, and of benefit to men, ought to be retained.

6. "Auricular confession is expedient and necessary."

The "Articles" were enforced by a bill of penalties of a very sanguinary character. Any one who denied or disputed against the first article, was to be burned as a heretic; and, by an unprecedented piece of cruelty, no loophole of escape by abjuration was to be permitted. Any one who opposed the other articles, as also any priest, monk, or nun, who married, was to be adjudged a felon, and to lose life and forfeit goods to the King; and all existing marriages of priests, monks, or nuns were declared void, and were to be dissolved. That there might be no remissness in enforcing these severe penalties, a commission was to be appointed in every county to inquire into all emerging cases of heresy under the Act, and to be armed with full authority to try and sentence heretics, according to due legal formality. It was at first intended that the penalties should come into operation on Midsummer Day, but a respite was granted till July 12.[1]

Latimer had been present during the whole of the debates, and felt, of course, the deepest interest in the discussion. The first article, indeed, still formed part of his own creed; he had never yet dreamed of denying the real presence; but the remaining five were the very

[1] *Lords' Journals.*

points on which he, as well as Cranmer and the other Reformers, were most anxious to secure liberty of thought and action in the Church of England, in order to render an alliance possible with the Lutheran Churches abroad. Great, therefore, must have been Latimer's disappointment at the enacting of a statute which seemed to place an insurmountable barrier against all prospect of a future union between the Reformed Churches of England and Germany. His distress was augmented by the addition to the statute of the sanguinary Bill of Pains and Penalties.

For three days after this Bill passed the House of Lords Latimer was absent;[1] unable to attend, probably, from excessive grief and anxiety about his future conduct. As a private individual, he had nothing to fear from the operation of the statute; he was not likely to controvert the first article; he was not married, and was therefore not affected by the laws against married priests; and the statute did not compel him to teach in accordance with the articles, but simply not to oppose or deny them. Had he been merely a clergyman, therefore, there would have been no difficulty in shaping his course; but he was a bishop; he would be called upon to preside in commissions for the trial of offenders under the statute; he might have to condemn and to hand over to the secular arm for condign punishment men, whom he respected and loved, men whose only fault was that they had openly proclaimed opinions which he himself also entertained. Thus his position had become a very embarrassing one; and he must have been grievously perplexed what course to follow. He had not much time for deliberation; on June 14, the Bill of Pains and Penalties was read the third time in the Lords'; within a

[1] Viz., June 17, 18, 19, *Lords' Journals.*

month it would come into operation, and he must therefore decide at once how it became him to act.

Unquestionably his first wish would be to resign his bishopric, and retire to private life. Many considerations would counsel this step. His health was infirm: his talents fitted him better for the work of a preacher than for the position of a ruler in the Church: he would thereby escape the unpleasant duty of enforcing a law which he had opposed: and he might hope to spend his days in peace and pious usefulness, safe from molestation under the protection of Cromwell and Cranmer. The further consideration, so much insisted upon sometimes by Latimer's enthusiastic admirers, that his resignation would be a noble and heroic protest against Henry's conduct, would not, we are convinced, weigh much with Latimer himself. Latimer was too practical a man not to know that his resignation would be ascribed not to his conscience, but to his fears; and he knew that it would certainly be most injurious to that holy cause which he had so long and so ably defended. The position of the Reformation was bad, but it was not desperate. Henry had, indeed, taken a retrograde step, but that step was not irrevocable. All the previous progress had been effected with Henry's co-operation and by the aid of his power; it was under his auspices that the Papal Supremacy had been renounced, that the religious houses had been abolished, that images and relics and many other superstitions had been removed, and above all that the English Bible had at last been freely printed and circulated; and though Gardiner's influence had in the meantime perverted him into a wrong course, it was surely not impossible that he might still be persuaded to reconsider his policy, and to return to the path from

which he had deviated. To resign, therefore, in such circumstances; to abandon Cranmer, already sorely weakened by the death of Fox; to retire from the conflict at the very first reverse of fortune; whatever modern declamatory writers may say, would be an act of very questionable wisdom or courage. It was not required that he should assent to the Act; nor would his integrity have been impeached by administering a statute which he condemned, for the judges do so every day without the slightest reflection being cast upon their honesty. He might honestly retain his office; watching every opportunity to aid in retrieving the lost victory; using all his influence to oppose the further designs of Gardiner's party; endeavouring to persuade the King to a better mind; trusting, as Cranmer did, that the great advantages still left to them, the priceless blessing of a free Bible, and the ordinances of a more-than-half-reformed Church, might in time, by God's help, more than counterbalance this unexpected check. These considerations, stigmatised too frequently as cowardice and worldly wisdom by men who admire impetuosity and scenic display, might well have determined Latimer to retain his bishopric, notwithstanding the many anxieties which this statute brought upon him. Cranmer and Cromwell, too, would of course join their voices to the arguments for retaining the bishopric, and counsel him to bow to the storm for a time, in the hope that a better day might soon dawn.

The Bill finally passed on June 28; on July 1, Latimer resigned his bishopric. This step has been eulogised in the highest terms of praise; and invidious contrasts have been drawn between the heroism of Latimer and the cowardice of Cranmer. But in truth these panegyrics are groundless; for Latimer has him-

self explained the precise motive for his resignation, and it can hardly be considered as a supremely heroic one. Cromwell, it seems (offended, probably, because Latimer would not follow him in his dangerous and crooked policy), represented to him that it was the King's wish that he should resign;[1] and Latimer resigned accordingly. He may have given some direct offence to Henry by his plain-spoken opposition to the measure during the debates; but Cromwell had no authority for the statement that he made; and the discovery of his deception would give a sad blow to the friendship that had so long subsisted between him and Latimer. On the whole, therefore, it seems quite certain that Latimer, in spite of his own feelings, and at the sacrifice of his ease, was willing to retain his bishopric, in the hope that he might still be of some service to religion; but the intimation of Henry's wish at once decided him, and he resigned his office. Such a resignation, of course, wants the air of romantic self-sacrifice with which it has so often been invested; but truth is better than romance. Perhaps it would have been better for himself and for his country had he retained his bishopric. His absence from the bench was an irreparable loss; it silenced for eight years the voice of the most eloquent preacher in England; and this was surely no gain to the cause of the Reformation. Cranmer's retention of his office has been stigmatised as time-serving; it *was* time-serving in a very high and noble sense, for it kept him in a position to serve the times: it placed him as the champion of the Reformation alone, among a host of enemies, for the rest of Henry's reign, and most nobly did he discharge himself of this heavy responsibility. Latimer has quite sufficient claims

[1] *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 845.

upon the veneration of all Englishmen without ascribing to him virtues that did not belong to him; and it is best that the plain unvarnished tale of his resignation as it actually occurred, should be substituted for the romantic fiction that has usually usurped its place in his biography.

When he proceeded to disrobe himself among his friends in his chamber, Foxe tells us that as he put off his rochet he gave a skip on the floor for joy, "feeling his shoulders so light, and being discharged of such a heavy burden."[1] The anecdote is characteristic, and has all the marks of truth; for whatever might result from his resignation, it was to him a joyful relief from a heavy burden of responsibility and care.

With the end of June, 1539, therefore, one important part of Latimer's life terminated for ever; he was, indeed, offered a bishopric after Edward's accession, but he never held that office again. For four years he had presided over the spiritual interests of a large and neglected diocese, and had shared in the great religious discussions of the legislature. He had laboured assiduously to provide for the spiritual enlightenment of the many souls of which he had the chief cure; he had been unremitting in promoting every reform of abuses and superstitions. He had accumulated no fortune; he had indulged in no ostentation; he had spent the large revenues of his See in aiding the cause of pure religion, and in dispensing simple hospitality amongst the poor. Few bishops in his own day or in any other have been better able to give a good account of their stewardship. Even in his short episcopate, too, he had seen many changes in religion, all of them, except the last, for the better; he had seen images cast out of churches, pilgrimages decried,

[1] Foxe, vii. 463.

monkery entirely abolished, the English Bible freely circulated, and all men encouraged to read it; and if, as his public labours concluded, a dark cloud seemed to have settled upon the prosperity of the Church, there was yet much reason for gratitude for the past, and no cause to despair of the future.

During these important debates in London, which, of course, entirely engrossed Latimer's attention, his diocese was again the scene of fierce religious excitement. Bristol, true to its reputation, was once more agitated by one of those violent controversies which had so often disturbed Latimer's peace. George Wishart, the Scotch Reformer, having been compelled to abandon his native country lest his heretical opinions should expose him to punishment, had found a refuge in Bristol, not improbably attracted thither by the belief that he would be secure under the patronage of Latimer. He was appointed lecturer in St. Nicholas' Church,[1] where Latimer himself had once preached with considerable effect, and his eloquence, which at a later period so powerfully fascinated the mind of Knox, produced a deep impression in Bristol, and revived in full strength those flames of religious discord, which indeed, in that zealous population, seemed never to die. The city was again in a state of uproar bordering on insurrection; and the municipal authorities, anxious to preserve the public peace, sent Wishart to prison. This step, however, only increased the confusion. Wishart had many devoted partisans; threats of violence were addressed to the Mayor in coarse language, which showed that there were already amongst the Reformers

[1] Not unnaturally it has been conjectured that he owed this appointment to Latimer. Wishart's name, however, never occurs in Latimer's *Register*. See Lorimer's *Historical Sketch of the Reformation in Scotland.*

men to whom godliness was little more than a form of words, which exerted no influence in purifying the life; and the hope was loudly expressed that when Cromwell heard of their proceedings, or when Latimer returned from London, the magistrates would be only too glad to procure immunity by humble submission. Latimer, as we have already seen, did not return at all to his diocese, and was thus spared the annoyance of attempting to restore peace amongst such an inflammable population. Wishart, who, if we may trust the local calendars had preached doctrines which were plainly heretical and socinian—even going so far as to maintain that the death of Christ was of no avail either to Himself or to us—was set free from prison, and was shortly after tried for heresy before Cranmer, and publicly recanted: and peace was again restored in the excited city, whose subsequent religious history is no longer associated with the life of Latimer.[1]

[1] Bristol possesses a series of admirable local chronicles; and it is much to be wished that some competent person would undertake to compile from these an authentic history of the religious movement in the city in the sixteenth century. Latimer's connection with Bristol has compelled the present biographer to enter into the great religious debates which agitated that city, and few subjects have given him more trouble. On Wishart's preaching in Bristol, see *Lorimer, ubi supra*, and Sayer's *Memoirs of Bristol;* the coarse letters referred to in the text, and which Lorimer has not seen, are in *Cleopatra*, E. v. pp. 389, etc., of the new notation.

CHAPTER VI.

From Latimer's Resignation of his Bishopric to his Restoration to Liberty on the Accession of Edward vi.

For the eight years that followed his resignation, the history of Latimer's life is almost a blank. Only the scantiest information can be gleaned; and no consecutive narrative of his proceedings during these eight years can even be attempted. In the absence, therefore, of any materials for a continuous biography, nothing further can be done than to interweave with a compendious narrative of the transactions of the period such brief notices of Latimer as have been preserved.

It was on the first of July that he resigned his bishopric; and on the seventh of the same month the Chapter of Worcester petitioned for a royal writ to proceed to the election of a successor. Then, if not before, his resignation would become known to Henry; and it was at this time probably that the interview took place with the King in which Latimer learned to his chagrin that Cromwell had deceived him, and that Henry had never counselled him to resign. The step, however, was irrevocable: Henry was certainly not the man to entreat any one to recall a precipitate action; and Latimer would have completely compromised himself by resuming his office. The royal *congé d'élire* was, therefore, issued to the Prior and Chapter of Worcester,

an was acted upon by them without delay. Before the end of July, the election was made, and on August 2, the customary writ was granted, requesting Cranmer to confirm the election of John Bell to the see of Worcester, "vacant by the voluntary resignation of Hugh Latimer."[1]

Latimer's resignation was, of course, displeasing to Henry, who considered it a censure of his policy by one whom he highly esteemed, and who was equally held in reverence by the great body of the people. It was not to be expected, therefore, that he should be allowed to return undisturbed to private life in the full enjoyment of complete personal liberty. He had not, indeed, done anything to expose him to the rigour of the law, still Henry would not permit him to be at large, and he was ordered to be kept in ward in the house of Sampson, Bishop of Chichester, no very unpleasant imprisonment, as the bishop's palace lay on the east side of Chancery Lane, with a cheerful outlook on Lincoln's Inn Fields, then open ground.[2] In other ways, however, Latimer was made to feel the inconvenience of the loss of Henry's favour. He had, for example, sent his commissary to his diocese to collect the customary "Pentecostal" which should have been paid at the previous Whitsuntide, and which amounted to fifty-five pounds, or nearly eight hundred pounds of our money. Latimer, who as we have seen, had saved nothing from the revenues of his diocese, could ill afford to lose this money; the commissary, however, was not allowed to collect it, for fear of exciting a sedition;[3] and it found its way, doubtless, into the all-absorbing coffers of Henry, as the "*ultimus heres*."

Latimer's custody in Sampson's house was not very

[1] "Per *liberam* resignationem, etc.," Rymer: *liberam* is not in the corresponding writ for Shaxton's successor.

[2] Stow's *Survey of London.*

[3] Latimer's *Sermons*, vol. i. p. 135.

rigorous; he was merely deprived of the liberty of going abroad, but his friends were not debarred from visiting and conversing with him. The chief topic of their conversation we can easily conjecture. His friends were not convinced of the propriety of his resignation, and were anxious that he should so far submit as to regain his liberty. They accused him of affecting singularity, and wilfully choosing "a way contrary to the King and the whole Parliament." [1] Latimer, however, was not to be persuaded to retrace his steps, by such arguments. He had been willing to retain his bishopric, and to do his duty as well as he could under difficult circumstances; but, having once resigned, his conscience would not allow him to make the necessary submission to Henry, or to acknowledge the justice of the measure which he had so vigorously opposed. He was kept in custody, therefore, in Sampson's house, and remained there, not without occasional apprehensions of more serious punishment, till the spring of 1540, when his jailor was himself committed to the Tower for relieving "traitorous persons."

Returning to the general history of the period, it will be remembered that an interval of a fortnight elapsed between the enacting of the famous "Bloody Statute," and the enforcing of it by penalties; and this respite gave opportunity to many of the most ardent Reformers to make provision for their safety by flight. Then, for the first time, England witnessed a great religious emigration; many in various positions in life, but especially young men of learning and energy, left a country where they could no longer remain without endangering their lives or compromising their consciences, and found a congenial refuge in the Protestant towns of Germany and Switzerland. Zurich, Basle, Strasburg, swarmed with these religious

[1] Latimer's *Sermons*, vol. i. p. 136.

refugees; the great leaders of the Reformation on the Continent, especially those of the Zwinglian school, were thus brought into the most intimate contact with the young and zealous English Reformers, and their influence had an important effect upon the subsequent course of the English Reformation.

The prospects in England were, indeed, gloomy and dispiriting: and pious hearts were grievously exercised with this mysterious arrangement of Divine Providence, or recognised in it the righteous punishment of the past ingratitude and carelessness of the nation. It was thus, for example, that three travellers moralised as they rode homewards through Wales, in the month of August, some six weeks after the Act had received the royal sanction:

"We know not the work of God," said George Constantine, vicar of Llanhuadaine; "if it be His pleasure, it is as easy for Him to overcome by few as with many; but I think, verily, that my Lord Privy Seal" [Cromwell] "persuaded my Lord of Canterbury, and that for other considerations than we do know."[1]

"As I can hear," remarked one of his companions, my Lord Privy Seal is utterly persuaded as the Act is" [believes it all implicitly].

"Wonderful are the ways of the Lord," Constantine rejoined; "Kings' hearts are in the hand of God; He turneth them as He listeth. How mercifully, how plentifully and purely hath God sent His word unto us here in England! Again, how unthankfully, how rebelliously, how carnally, and unwillingly do we receive it! Who is there almost that will have a Bible, but he must be compelled thereto! How loath be our priests to teach the commandments, the articles of the faith, and the Pater-Noster in English! Again, how unwilling be the people to learn it! Yea, they jest at it, calling it the new Pater-Noster, and new learning: so that, as help me God, if we amend not, I fear we shall be in more bondage and blindness than ever we were. *I pray you, was not one of the best preachers in Christendom Bishop of Worcester?* (Latimer, namely). And now

[1] Cromwell probably consented to the Articles in the hope of being able to neutralise them through the German marriage.

there is one made that never preached that I heard, except it were the Pope's law." [1]

The speaker, it will be seen, took a very gloomy and exaggerated view of the religious condition of the people, for we know that the Scriptures were eagerly read by many thousands; yet this very exaggeration shows what a profound feeling of gloom and disappointment had settled on the minds of the adherents of the Reformation in England.

And this feeling of gloomy despondency at home, was equalled by the indignation of the Reformers abroad, and especially of the German Protestants, who had so recently hoped for a closer concord in doctrine and worship with the Church of England. "We are all of us amazed," writes Bucer to Cranmer,[2] "more than I can express, at the sight of those decrees; . . . it is idle to suppose that we should not be offended by those most severe decrees." The Elector of Saxony remonstrated with Henry in similar terms of indignant astonishment at the enacting of a decree so bitter and sharp, "made by the conspiracy and craftiness of certain bishops, in whose mind the veneration and worshipping of Roman ungodliness is rooted."[3] And even the gentle Melanchthon was roused to wrath by a measure so sanguinary and treacherous, which he, too, ascribed, not to Henry himself, but to the "wily and subtle sophistications" of the Romanising bishops. He sent to the King a long and earnest letter with an elaborate refutation of the articles; and he entreated him, for the love of Christ, not to defile his conscience by defending "the idolatry, errors, and cruelty and filthy lusts of Antichrist."[4] The letter was afterwards printed, and its circulation greatly irritated Henry, all the more that

[1] Narrative of George Constantine, printed in the *Archæologia*. vol. xxiii.
[2] October 29, 1539. *Zurich Letters*, p. 526.
[3] Strype, *Eccl. Mem.* i. 2. 438.
[4] Foxe, v. 351.

Melanchthon referred in the plainest terms to the disgrace of detaining in prison such men as *Latimer* and Shaxton, very "lanthorns of light" to the Church of England.

These gloomy prospects were, however, unexpectedly dissipated for a time; and, indeed, the six articles were never enforced over England with the relentless severity contemplated by Gardiner and his abettors. Cromwell had failed in his project for advancing the Reformation in England; but his other project of procuring an alliance with a Protestant princess, was successful. Henry's scruples were overcome; he fancied himself in love with Holbein's exquisite miniature; and though anxious to evade committing himself to the religious principles of the Smalcaldic League, yet his alliance with them could not but influence his domestic policy. The execution of the Statute was therefore not "put in use" immediately, and the threatened commissions for searching for heretics were not in the meantime issued. More than this, in a royal proclamation of November 14,[1] Henry expressed in more emphatic language than he had ever yet employed, his earnest desire that all his subjects, "at times convenient, might give themselves to the attaining the knowledge of God's word," a desire which could not be accomplished, he added, "by any means," better than "by granting to them the free and liberal use of the Bible in our own *maternal* English tongue."

The marriage contract with Anne of Cleves was signed in September, and the remaining months of the year were spent in preparation for the approaching nuptials. The progress of the bride towards England was unusually tedious; storms delayed her long at Calais, but at last she arrived at Dover on December 27, and immediately set out

[1] Rymer's *Fœdera*, xiv. p. 649: Anderson's *Annals*, ii. 83.

to meet her impatient lord. The marriage was duly solemnised by Cranmer on January 6; but Cromwell's success in accomplishing his long-cherished desire, proved his ruin. The story need not be again repeated. Every one knows the degrading details of Henry's unfortunate fourth matrimonial speculation: the unhappy Queen, in a strange land, surrounded by strangers of whose language she was totally ignorant, ungainly in her person, and unable to make amends for her want of beauty by her sprightliness or wit: Henry "strook to the heart" at the very first interview, submitting unwillingly to the marriage ceremony, becoming daily more disgusted with his awkward spouse, and openly expressing his dislike in the coarsest terms: the courtiers watching the progress of events with eager anxiety, and only too glad to outbid each other in zeal in gratifying their sovereign's wishes: the plot culminating at last in the loathsome details and process of the divorce; all this is familiar to readers as one of the most humiliating pages in English history. No one has undertaken to apologise for Henry's treatment of Anne of Cleves; indeed, Henry's relations with his queens form the blackest side of his character, and compel the biographer, who would otherwise speak with respect and even admiration, to use the language of severest censure.

The ultimate results of the marriage were most unfortunate for the English Protestants; for a few months, however, at the commencement of 1540, it secured for them a greater amount of freedom than they had hitherto enjoyed, and their hopes began to revive again. "The state and condition of England," writes one of the refugees to Bullinger,[1] "is much more sound and healthy since the marriage of the Queen than it was before. She is an

[1] John Butler's Letter, Feb. 24, 1540. *Zurich Letters*, p. 627.

excellent woman, and one who fears God; great hopes are entertained of a very extensive propagation of the Gospel by her influence. There is now no persecution. . . The Word is powerfully preached by an individual named *Barnes*, and his fellow ministers" [Garret, Latimer's chaplain, and Jerome, Vicar of Stepney, one of Latimer's dearest friends]. "Books of every kind may safely be exposed to sale." In short, the operation of the Bloody Statute, so much dreaded, had been for the time completely suspended; the Reformers were at perfect liberty to preach as they pleased, and to circulate all sorts of books; and Latimer was perhaps regretting his resignation, thinking that he might have been of more service to religion, as a free man in his diocese, than looking out over Lincoln's Inn Fields from the windows of the Bishop of Chichester's palace.

This short gleam of sunshine lasted only while Henry kept up the appearance of outward courtesy towards his queen, and while he was perhaps undecided as to his next movements. In April, 1540, however, it was plain to every one that he was by no means satisfied with the unfortunate Anne, and after the first week of May he openly deserted her. His disgust, naturally enough, embittered his feelings towards those who had been most active in promoting the detested marriage; and the Protestants at length began to feel the weight of his displeasure. Almost the first to suffer from the royal disappointment was Latimer's old Cambridge friend Barnes. He had been especially active in promoting the German alliance, and probably expected some reward for his services. He had also been conspicuous in using the unwonted liberty of preaching, which all seem to have enjoyed in the spring of 1540. Unhappily he had not yet lost his former rashness.

Gardiner had preached at Paul's Cross in the middle of February, and, as a matter of course, had attacked the doctrines of the Reformers. Barnes occupied the same pulpit three Sundays later, and replied to Gardiner in a strain of ill-judged personal abuse. "He made a pleasant allegory of a cock-fight" (says Foxe, who sees no harm in thus comparing a grave discussion on important religious doctrines to a cock-fight), "terming the said Gardiner to be a fighting-cock, and himself to be another; but the *garden*-cock lacketh good spurs,"—and so on in the same vein. The consequences may be anticipated. Gardiner complained to Henry of the indignity thus publicly put upon him; Barnes was summoned into the royal presence, and after some hesitation he agreed to retract what he had taught. He read his retractation accordingly at Paul's Cross, but added to it a reiteration of his former opinions, for which he was summarily committed to the Tower, with his companions Jerome and Garret, there to await the King's pleasure, and the determination of Parliament.

In a few days the Tower received a more distinguished victim. On June 10, Cromwell was accused of high treason by the Duke of Norfolk before the Privy Council, and was arrested and sent to the Tower. Such a step as the accusation of the Prime Minister of England, was of course not taken without previously consulting the King, to whom it is clear that Cromwell had somehow given mortal offence. What the exact offence of the great minister was, has been a matter of debate ever since his fall; but the common rumour was probably well-founded which ascribed his downfall to his promoting the German marriage, and opposing Henry's contemplated divorce. For it was already notorious that the King's affections had been captivated by a young lady, niece of the Duke of

Norfolk, as unlike his German spouse as possible, little of stature, arch and sprightly, and charming with all the vivacity of youth. Henry had first seen this juvenile beauty at a banquet given by Gardiner to celebrate the marriage with Anne of Cleves; Gardiner had marked the impression made upon his royal master, and all the Romish party were of course anxious to promote the influence of Catherine Howard, as the most hopeful means of regaining their lost supremacy. Henry was an impetuous lover, and the citizens of London were not a little scandalised to see the King "frequently in the day-time, and sometimes at midnight, pass over" [to visit his new love] "on the river Thames in a little boat." The citizens spoke only of adultery, but Henry meditated divorce; and on Cromwell's imprisonment the voice of public rumour declared that he had been imprisoned because "he did not support the King, as Winchester and the other courtiers did, in this project, but rather asserted that it would be neither for the King's honour, nor for the good of the kingdom."[1] In truth it was a wonderful instance of history repeating itself; and a parallel might be drawn in many particulars between the position of affairs when Henry was prosecuting his first divorce from his first foreign wife, and that when he was meditating his second divorce from a second foreign queen. Anne Boleyn had ruined Wolsey; Catharine Howard overthrew Cromwell.

The unhappy minister had few friends; the Lords hated him because he was an upstart; the Commons had not recovered their equanimity so seriously disturbed by the enormous subsidy that Cromwell had just demanded. Scarce a single voice was raised in favour of one who had a few days before been the fountain of wealth and

[1] Hilles to Bullinger: *Zurich Letters*, p. 202.

honour, surrounded by thousands of greedy petitioners. A Bill of Attainder was passed denouncing him as "the most false and corrupt traitor, deceiver and circumventor against your most royal person and the imperial crown of this your realm that hath been known, seen, or heard of in all the time of your most noble reign." The proofs of such a monstrous accusation were very few and slight; it was said that he had of his own authority set free some persons suspected of being traitors; that he had granted licences for corn, etc.; that he "being a person of as poor and low degree as few be within this your realm," had dared to say that he was sure of the King; and that he was a heretic, who secretly connived at the circulation of heretical books, and was the patron of all heretics, especially of Barnes, then prisoner in the Tower.[1] No evidence worthy of the name was brought against him; he was not even tried, for by an infamous law, which he had himself procured in the previous Parliament, persons accused of treason might be condemned without trial. On June 29, Henry gave his royal assent to the Bill prepared by his obsequious legislators; but the death of Cromwell was delayed for a month. For Henry was busy prosecuting his divorce before Convocation, and Cromwell's evidence was not altogether useless to him. Convocation were not difficult to persuade; after listening to some evidence, most revoltingly indecent, they unanimously decided that Henry had never given his "inward consent" to his marriage with Anne of Cleves, that the "sacrament of matrimony" was therefore incomplete, and utterly null and void, and that both parties were free to marry again.[2]

[1] Burnet, iv. 415.
[2] Cranmer's *Register:* Burnet, iv. 431, etc.

On July 28, Cromwell perished on the scaffold, quietly committing his soul into the hands of God, and patiently "suffering the stroke of the axe by a ragged and butcherly miser" [wretch], "who very ungoodly performed the office."[1] It is not creditable to English historical inquirers, that the great statesman has not yet found a fitting biographer; but he does not need any lengthened epitaph. His faults have appeared sufficiently in the course of this narrative; he was too subservient to his master, and his hands were defiled by ill-gotten gains; but to him England owes an eternal debt of gratitude for his labour in securing to her a reformed Church and a free Bible. In energy and ability few statesmen in England or any other country have surpassed him; and Cranmer who knew him well, and loved him dearly, has scarcely exaggerated in saying that "he was such a servant in wisdom, diligence, faithfulness, and experience, as no prince in this realm ever had."[2]

Two days later, Barnes, Jerome, and Garret perished at the stake, condemned to death as Cromwell had been, by process in Parliament without any public hearing. They died with patience and constancy, "remaining in the fire without crying out," says one, who was probably an eye-witness, "as quiet and patient as though they had felt no pain."[3] As if to give terrible emphasis to Henry's declaration that he inclined neither to the one side nor to the other, three priests were executed at the same time for treason, Abel, Featherstone, and Powell, the last of them known to us years ago as one of Latimer's opponents at Bristol.

[1] Foxe, v. 403.
[2] Cranmer's *Remains*, p. 401.
[3] Hilles to Bullinger: *Zurich Letters*, p. 209.

During these occurrences Latimer remained, as before, in honourable imprisonment in the palace of the Bishop of Chichester. In the spring of 1540, however, that bishop fell under suspicion as too zealous a supporter of the old Romish practices, and was sent to the Tower. It became necessary, therefore, once more to decide what was to be done with Latimer; and on such a subject Henry was, of course, consulted. In the end of April, Sir Ralph Sadler received royal instruction to write to Cromwell, then newly made Earl of Essex: "Touching Latimer, his majesty would have him yet to remain in the Bishop's house till he may speak with you, and devise what is best to do with him."[1] It would appear that, as the result of this communication between Henry and Cromwell, Latimer was allowed a greater amount of freedom, and was perhaps entirely set at liberty. With his characteristic boldness he used his freedom to support his old friend Barnes. In the last letter probably that Barnes ever wrote, after referring to his fierce controversy with Gardiner, he adds, "many persons approve my statements, yet no one stands forward except Latimer,"[2] who thus stood nobly to the last by the friend whom, in spite of his rash impetuosity, he loved and respected as a true minister of Christ. For a time after his release Latimer may have lived with Cranmer at Lambeth, or with his old nurse Mrs. Statham. The general pardon to all offenders, published in July, and which excepted only the Anabaptists and the Sacramen-

[1] *State Papers*, i. 627: the writer goes on to speak of Henry's intention to make a present of the Bishop's mule to the Duke of Suffolk, which has been referred to as a proof of Henry's mean cruelty to Latimer: but it was probably the Bishop of Chichester's mule that was meant, not Latimer's.

[2] Barnes to Æpinus: *Zurich Letters*, p. 617.

taries, would of course include Latimer, who was thus definitely set at liberty. One tyrannical condition, however, was attached to his freedom, as a token of Henry's displeasure: he was prohibited from preaching, or from coming within six miles of the two Universities, the city of London, or his own diocese.[1] Thus condemned to silence and obscurity, Latimer seems to have spent his time in visiting the houses of some of his hospitable country friends; and there were many in various parts of England who would gladly welcome under their roof the preacher whose words had once shaken the nation, and whose presence would doubtless bring comfort and heavenly peace to many a household. From this time, July, 1540, we have no certain knowledge of his life till May, 1546, when the State Papers will again bring him before us, incurring the suspicion of the Council by his bold sympathy with the more vigorous Reformers. Of the intervening years no record has been preserved; only the vaguest information has drifted down to us, related with such provoking indefiniteness that the few facts cannot be assigned to their precise date, or chronicled with certainty in any exact order. Such as it is, it may best be inserted here, with such conjectures as to the probable date and order of each occurrence, as seem warranted by the circumstances.

"A little after he had renounced his bishopric," says Foxe, "first he was almost slain, but sore bruised, with the fall of a tree. Then, coming up to London for remedy, he was molested and troubled of the bishops, whereby he was again in no little danger; and at length was cast into the Tower, where he continually remained prisoner, till the time that blessed King Edward entered

[1] Hilles to Bullinger: *Zurich Letters*, p. 215.

his crown, by means whereof the golden mouth of this preacher, long shut up before, was now opened again."[1] The date of the accident here referred to cannot of course be fixed; Foxe says it was "shortly after he had renounced his bishopric," but Foxe's chronology is proverbially vague. We may assume, however, that it could not have happened *before* his committal to the Bishop of Chichester's palace; it must therefore be assigned to some date later than July, 1540. Remembering, also, that Latimer had been expressly prohibited from approaching London, we shall probably not err in conjecturing that it was not till the commencement of 1544 that he ventured to the metropolis, doubtless to avail himself of the skill of his old friend Butts; for the Parliament of 1544 materially mitigated the severity of the Bloody Statute, and he would probably be able to come to London without incurring any danger.

Vague as Foxe is, Latimer's servant, Augustine Bernher, is still more unsatisfactory; and his vagueness is the more provoking because no one knew better the whole circumstances of this part of Latimer's life. His account, indeed, is so carelessly expressed as almost to suggest to an unwary reader an entirely false version of this portion of Latimer's history. Writing in the vague declamatory vein so inimical to all accuracy of statement, he says that Latimer, rather than submit to the Six Articles, was content "to be cast into the Tower, where he daily looked for death," a most unhappy summary of eight years of his master's life. "But," he proceeds, "God mercifully delivered him, to the great comfort of all godly hearts, and singular commodity of His Church, at which time he begun to set forth his plough,"[2] and to

[1] Foxe, vii. 463.

[2] Latimer's *Sermons*: Bernher's *Dedication*, p. 318, etc.

preach with more diligence than ever. So meagre, indeed, is Bernher's account of Latimer's proceedings at this period that it adds nothing to our knowledge, but rather needs to be interpreted and modified to keep it from being glaringly at variance with the few facts that are perfectly ascertained.

It has also been asserted by Echard that Latimer used to be entertained with other Reforming preachers in the hospitable mansion of the Dowager Lady Latimer, during the period of her second widowhood, and before she became Henry's sixth queen. The story is not altogether incredible, but it is highly improbable, for her second widowhood was a very short one, lasting only from about the end of January to July 10, 1543. If we accept the occurrence as possible, we must assign it to the spring of 1543; and it is interesting to believe that Latimer's teaching may have implanted a love of the Reformation in the heart of the only one of Henry's queens, who manifested any sincere and intelligent regard for the doctrines of the Reformers.

Finally, Thomas Becon tells us that when he was in trouble in the reign of Henry, and had to seek shelter at a distance from London, he met Latimer in Warwickshire, and was enchanted with his conversation, as much as if he had been "clean delivered from Egypt and quietly placed in the new glorious Jeursalem."[1] It was about 1545 that Becon was in hiding, and though no place is mentioned, we may conjecture that it was at Baxterley, the residence of the Glovers, intimate friends, and, it is surmised, even distant relations of Latimer, that the interview took place.

Such, then, are the few scattered gleanings which

[1] *Jewel of Joy*: Becon's works, vol. ii. 426.

contain all the allusions to Latimer's life from his liberation in 1540 to the spring of 1546; and the summary appears all the more meagre after the full and copious narrative which his correspondence furnished of the four years of his episcopate. We can see only the general course of his life during these six years of silence; we see him travelling from one friend's house to another, welcomed in many a country mansion and many a quiet parsonage; not publicly preaching, since the King had forbidden this; but in the family circle, by the influence of a pure example, and the power of holy conversation, diffusing around him the love and knowledge of his Divine Master; sowing the seed which was afterwards to ripen into a glorious harvest. To himself also, after the hurry and excitement of the past fourteen years, this period of repose would be neither disagreeable nor useless. His bodily frame needed rest; his mind needed to be relaxed after its harassing labours; he wanted leisure to study more closely his own theological opinions, and to purge himself from that leaven of Romish doctrine which still adhered to him. Much would be learned if in those years of rest he practised that habit, which his servant tells us he observed in his more active days, and which seems so strange to our altered notions, of being "ordinarily every morning, both summer and winter, about two of the clock in the morning, most diligently at his book."[1] When he comes before us as the great preacher of the reign of Edward VI., we shall find his religious views improved in richness of experience and accuracy of statement by the leisure and study of these years of rest.

It only remains that we should briefly trace the progress of religion in England down to the period when Latimer

[1] Bernher's *Dedication:* Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 320.

again appears prominently on the scene. The advancement of Catherine Howard to the throne, of course increased the influence of Gardiner and the Romish party; and the Reformers again seemed threatened with the full violence of the Bloody Statute. Again, however, had they to thank that overruling Hand which had so often saved them from destruction. Affairs on the Continent were threatening; and Gardiner, as the ablest of all Henry's diplomatists, was accordingly sent abroad, and was detained there, from various causes, till October, 1541, only returning to find that the source of all his renewed influence had failed him. The long-delayed commissions for searching after heresies were, indeed, issued, but even these were wonderfully overruled in their severity. In January, 1541, the commission for the diocese of London was issued to Bonner, who had succeeded Stokesley in that see, and had changed his opinions upon Cromwell's fall.[1] That busy prelate, anxious to cleanse himself from all suspicion of having imbibed heretical opinions from his late patron, lost no time in carrying his commission into execution. In almost every parish of London men and women were arrested, not merely for the offences specified in the Six Articles, but for neglecting the old ceremonies of the Church, for reading the Bible aloud, for speaking approvingly of Barnes, for eating flesh in Lent, and similar offences. The prisons were filled: good Mrs. Statham, so well known to us as Latimer's nurse, was "noted" for harbouring in her house Latimer, Barnes, and others; Dr. Taylor, of St. Peter's, Cornhill, of whom we have heard in the matter of Lambert, was committed to custody; Crome was arrested; Grafton and Whitchurch, who had printed the Bible in Paris three

[1] "It had been good that he had been despatched long ago," was his sympathetic observation when he heard of Cromwell's arrest.

years before, under Bonner's own superintendence, were incarcerated. Thomas Becon, from whom we have just quoted, was sent to prison, and, it is said, nearly five hundred others. But Bonner's zeal overreached itself; the prisoners were too numerous ; no one could contemplate the possibility of a holocaust of five hundred victims ; there were, besides, legal formalities which Bonner had overlooked, and the whole matter ended in a general jail-delivery. The Lord-Chancellor suggested that the prisoners should become "bound for each other, to appear in the Star-Chamber, the next day after All Souls', if they were called ; but neither was there any person called, neither did there any appear."[1] One or two seem to have been sent to Smithfield for openly attacking the Six Articles ; some recanted and bore faggots, but, on the whole, the dreaded danger passed off with little injury. Nor was there wanting, even in this dark period of apprehended persecution, some hopeful symptom to cheer the hearts of the Reformers ; for, in May, Henry issued a proclamation, ordering more peremptorily than before those parishes which had hitherto neglected to provide themselves with Bibles, as he had enjoined, to procure a copy of the largest volume before November 1, under the penalty of forfeiting forty shillings a month (= thirty pounds), a sum sufficiently large to ensure prompt obedience. On the whole, therefore, the year was by no means so fatal to the interests of the Reformation as it threatened to be, and its last closing days witnessed the rapid decline of the Romish ascendancy.

Henry's fifth marriage was one long sixteen months' honeymoon. He declared that he had never known connubial happiness till now. Catherine Howard had all the

[1] Foxe, vol. v. p. 451.

sprightly vivacity of Anne Boleyn; her lively temperament was an endless pleasure to a monarch who was now almost a confirmed invalid; and, in the depth of his affectionate gratitude for so suitable a partner, after his previous matrimonial disappointments, he had ordered one of his prelates to give public thanks to God for His great mercy in giving him such an excellent wife. From this pleasant dream he was rudely awaked, on All Souls' Day, by a communication from Cranmer, acquainting him with his Queen's misconduct, certainly, before marriage, and possibly, also, since her nuptials. Henry was thunderstruck with this unpleasant intelligence; he had never suspected his spouse of any indiscretion, and was so completely taken aback by the disclosures that he burst into tears. The unfortunate Queen, whose early years had wanted the care of a watchful mother, and who had been betrayed into dangerous courses by the evil influence of vicious attendants, was committed to prison, and a new parliament was summoned to decide the question of her guilt or innocence.

The Parliament assembled on January 16, 1542, and was not long in coming to the conclusion that the Queen had been guilty. The unhappy Catherine, who had scarcely passed out of her girlhood, was ordered to be beheaded; and her husband, left for the fifth time a widower, was humbly entreated by his subservient Parliament not to be over much troubled with these unexpected misfortunes, lest his grief should cut short his valuable life. A new Convocation had also assembled, the second of what may be called the Reformed Convocations, and the proceedings commenced with the customary Latin sermon, preached by Cox, Archdeacon of Ely, and tutor of the young Prince Edward. The opening sermon of the previous Convocation had been preached by Latimer, and had

stirred all England to the very depths; but, on the present occasion, the hearers were probably not shocked by any plain-spoken denunciation of their own offences and negligence. "Ye are the salt of the earth," was Cox's text; and the sermon, it is more than probable, was in strong contrast to the bold and faithful eloquence of Latimer. The state of religion, of course, occupied the attention of Convocation; and proposals were made for revising the English version of the Holy Scriptures, which, it was alleged, was in many respects inaccurate and unworthy of the original. A scheme was accordingly devised for distributing the books of the New Testament among the various Bishops for a careful revision. The object which the Romish party had in view in promoting this measure soon became apparent. Gardiner read in Convocation a list of certain words which he proposed to leave in Latin, on account of "the majesty of the matter contained in them;" or as Fuller, with his caustic shrewdness puts it, "he wished such words to be kept as had long kept him and his fellow priests." No doubt Gardiner hoped, by dint of good generalship, to get the actual version called in or limited in its circulation, until some new revised version was finished, which, as Cranmer had remarked, would not have been till "the day after doomsday." His artifices were, however, unsuccessful; Cranmer referred the matter to Henry, and the King withdrew the revision from the Bishops, and promised to submit it to the Universities. The revision never took place; Holy Scripture was not to be tampered with by men whose lives had been spent in preventing the circulation of the Word of God among the people.

Next year, however (1543), as if to demonstrate the truth of Cromwell's assertion, that Henry belonged to

neither party, but was perfectly impartial in his policy, Parliament passed an Act, called, by a curious misnomer, "An Act for the Advancement of True Religion," which must have brought a smile of triumph over the faces of Gardiner and his friends. It ordered that "all books of the Old and New Testament in English, of Tyndale's translation, should be clearly and utterly abolished and extinguished, and forbidden to be kept and used in the realm," and that after the first of October no one should openly read any part of Holy Scripture in English, unless appointed by the King or the ordinary, under penalty of a month's imprisonment; and even went so far as to enact that women (except women of high birth), artificers, apprentices, and labourers, should not read the Scriptures to themselves or any others, openly or privately, under the same penalty. This was the most decidedly retrograde step that Henry had taken since the passing of the Six Articles; yet there were mingled with it various circumstances which considerably mitigated its severity, and which were owing to Cranmer's resolute opposition. The penalty, it will be seen, was a very mild one compared with the sanguinary punishments enacted by the Bloody Statute. Against Tyndale's version the Act was entirely inoperative; for, besides the translation bearing that illustrious martyr's name, there were others in circulation, virtually his, under another name, which were printed with a direct royal sanction that Parliament dared not invade. And there were so many exceptions, so many loopholes of escape in the clauses which limited the public and private reading of Holy Scripture, that there could be little difficulty in evading them without incurring the penalty of the law; and thus the Romish party rather manifested their anxious desire to oppose the progress of the Reformation, than

succeeded in throwing any insuperable obstacles in the way of its success.

This year also was printed (May 29) the long-meditated book, *The necessary Doctrine and Erudition of a Christian Man;* the conjoint result of the deliberations of the leading Divines on both sides. The Reforming party were, on the whole, unsuccessful in their efforts to infuse into this revised edition of the *Institution of a Christian Man,* opinions more in accordance with their own enlarged orthodoxy. The mass, the seven sacraments, prayers for the dead, and several other traces of the old leaven of the Romish creed, were enforced as the truth of God, to be believed by all men as necessary to salvation. Purgatory, indeed, with its endless catalogue of abuses, found no place in the book, and, so far, it was an improvement upon the *Institution* which had preceded it; but, on the other hand, it was expressly declared by Henry in his preface that the "reading of the Holy Scripture is not so necessary for the laity that they be bound to read it, but as the Prince and the policy of the realm shall think convenient it may be tolerated or taken from them." The book thus completed, after the careful deliberations of three years, was issued with royal authority, which, it will be remembered had never been extended to the *Institution,* and was popularly known, in consequence, as "The King's Book." And in contemplating it, Gardiner and his friends must have congratulated themselves upon the success of their labours; it was assuredly no small triumph to them to have thus almost arrested the progress of the Reforming movement in England, and, in some respects, to have induced Henry to retrace his steps. They had, indeed, been foiled in their efforts to extinguish Protestantism by relentless severity; but they still persevered in them.

Gardiner, it was said by the common people, had bent his bow to shoot at some of the head deer. An attempt was made to incriminate Cranmer, who was even represented to Henry as the great arch-heretic of England; but all such efforts were vain, Henry's confidence in the perfect honesty and integrity of the primate was not to be shaken, and the conspirators found to their great chagrin that they had overshot their mark, and they had to provide for their own safety by submission and humble apology. Minor offenders, however, against the persecuting statutes, were not so fortunate. On July 28, three men were burned at Windsor, in the very sight of Henry; and before Christmas, Gardiner trusted "to visit and cleanse a good part of the realm" after the same fashion.

But, as Foxe quaintly remarks, "God commonly sendeth a shrewd cow short horns." Gardiner's projected cleansing by fire and faggot was happily arrested at the very commencement. On July 10, Henry once again entered the married state; and, providentially for the Reformation, his Queen, the beautiful and accomplished Catherine Parr, was a woman of unquestionable piety, who deeply loved the Gospel as the Reformers preached it. All her influence with Henry was employed, cautiously, yet not the less effectually, in mitigating the ferocity of the Acts against the Reformers, and in gently inclining him towards a further Reformation in his kingdom. She was not always successful, it is true; even her own life was sometimes in danger; Henry's temper, exasperated by a painful malady, would little brook restraint, and occasionally broke out in ungovernable violence; deeds of blood still marked his reign with indelible blots, but, from the period of his marriage with Catherine Parr, we may date the commencement of a gradual

brightening of the prospects of the English Reformation.

In 1544, for example, through the energy of Cranmer, most important limitations were attached to the operation of the infamous "Bloody Statute." It was decreed by Parliament [35 Henry VIII. c. 5] that no offences older than one year were to be actionable; that no one was to be brought to trial till he had been legally presented on the oaths of twelve men, nor to be imprisoned till he had thus been indicted. Preachers, moreover, were not to be liable to accusation for words spoken against the Six Articles, unless proceedings against them were instituted within forty days of the alleged utterance of heretical doctrine. A royal warrant might still override all these safeguards against persecution; but, on the whole, the English Reformers had abundant reason for gratitude to Cranmer for thus extracting the fangs of Gardiner's fiery scorpions. Another most important step in the progress of the Reformation was the introduction, by royal mandate this year (1544), of prayers in the English tongue, in addition to the public reading already decreed of a chapter of the New Testament, in English, by the parish clergyman every Sunday and holy-day throughout the year.[1] The language of the royal mandate is so beautiful, that it is justice to Henry to give it almost entire, as illustrating a side of his character that has been somewhat overlooked in the hasty, popular judgments, passed upon him.

"Calling to remembrance the miserable state of all Christendom, being at this present, so plagued with most cruel wars, hatreds and dissensions, as no place of the same almost remaineth in good peace, agreement and concord; the help and remedy whereof far exceeding the power of any man, must be called for of Him who only is able to

[1] Strype, *Eccl. Mem.* vol. i., pt. i. 580.

grant our petitions, and never forsaketh nor repelleth any that firmly believe and faithfully call upon Him; unto whom also the examples of Scripture encourageth us, in all these and other our troubles and necessities, to fly and to cry for aid and succour; being therefore resolved to have continually from henceforth general processions,[1] in all cities, towns, churches, and parishes, of this our realm, said and sung, with such reverence and devotion as appertaineth: forasmuch as heretofore the people, partly for lack of good instruction and calling on, partly for that they understood no part of such prayers or suffrages as were used to be sung or said, have used to come very slackly to the processions when the same have been commanded heretofore:

We have set forth certain godly prayers and suffrages in our native English tongue,—to the setting forward of the glory of God, and the true worshipping of His most Holy Name,—not to be for a month or two observed, and afterwards slenderly considered, as our other injunctions have, to our no little marvel, been used; but to the intent that, as well the same, as our other injunctions, may earnestly be set forth, by preaching, good exhortations, and other ways to the people, in such sort, as they, feeling the godly taste thereof, may, godly and joyously, with thanks, receive, embrace, and frequent the same."[2]

The godly "prayers and suffrages," thus issued by royal authority in the English language, formed the first rudiments of that *Book of Common Prayer* which has exercised so great an influence on the religious opinions and sentiments of the English nation. They included large extracts from the Psalms, and a paraphrase on the Lord's Prayer; but the chief feature was a Litany, or Prayer of Procession, in many respects the same as the present noble Litany, except that it contained invocations to the Virgin, to angels, prophets, apostles and martyrs.

By way of further discouragement to Gardiner, his nephew and secretary was accused of treasonably practising against the Royal Supremacy, and was executed as a traitor,

[1] *i.e.*, prayers said or sung while marching round the church.
[2] Burnet, vol. iv. 530, from Cranmer's *Register*.

the bishop himself not escaping without suspicion of having been privy to his kinsman's treason; and an attempt to bring a charge of heresy against Cranmer in the House of Commons, was summarily suppressed by Henry, who compelled the wretched framer of the charge to go immediately to Lambeth, and ask the Archbishop's forgiveness. When it is added that Henry was abroad in France, engaged in war, for most of the last six months of the year, that Gardiner and Norfolk were with him, and that the Queen was left as regent in his absence, with Cranmer at the head of her Council, it will be readily understood that the Reformers in England had again begun to recover their fallen spirits, and that the year 1544 was looked upon by them as furnishing many reasons for gratitude to the God who had so wonderfully over-ruled the malice of their enemies.

The next year, 1545, was equally favourable to the interests of the Reformation. Henry's attention was mainly occupied with his wars against Scotland and France, and with expedients to replenish his utterly exhausted treasury. Foxe finds nothing done this year in England, worthy to be noted; the Reformers being left apparently without molestation, to preach as they pleased. One more attempt was made to overthrow Cranmer, but was defeated with such signal discomfiture, that the good Archbishop's enemies made no further attempts against him. It was the famous occasion which Shakespeare has depicted with his usual happy skill, and his usual disregard also for chronological accuracy. Some of the Privy Council accused Cranmer to Henry of having, through the men whom he patronised, "infected the whole realm with his unsavory doctrines till three parts of England were become abominable heretics:" and they requested that he might be committed to the Tower. Henry agreed to allow Cranmer

to be brought before the Council for examination, but declined to send him to the Tower; and summoning the Archbishop, he gave him his own ring, as a warrant to appeal against any decree of the Council. The sequel is known to every reader of English literature: how the Council, with the insolence of presumed triumph, kept the Archbishop dancing attendance at their door, "'mongst pursuivants, pages, and footboys;" how the King and Butts, themselves unseen, witnessed this "high promotion of his Grace of Canterbury;" how the patient primate was bullied by the Council, and ordered to be conveyed to the Tower forthwith; their discomfiture when Cranmer appealed, and produced the royal signet; their alarm when Henry strode in; the King's indignant rebuke of his cowardly councillors:—

> "I'd thought I'd had men of some understanding
> And wisdom of my council; but I find none.
> Was it discretion, lords, to let this man,
> This good man *(few of you deserve that title)*,
> This honest man, wait like a lousy footboy
> At Chamber-door? and one as great as you are?
> Why, what a shame was this! Did my commission
> Bid ye so far forget yourselves? I gave ye
> Power as he was a counsellor to try him,
> Not as a groom: there's some of ye, I see,
> More out of malice than integrity,
> Would try him to the utmost, had ye mean;
> Which ye shall never have while I live.
> My lords, respect him;
> Take him, and use him well, he's worthy of it.
> I will say this much for him, if a prince
> May be beholding to a subject, I
> Am, for his love and service, so to him."[1]

All this, written in such pages as those of Shakespeare and Foxe, is one of the most familiar passages of English

[1] Henry VIII., Act v., Scene iii.

history, and is exquisitely characteristic of the leading actors in the scene.

The Parliament, which did not assemble till the close of the year, was almost entirely occupied in devising schemes for providing funds for Henry's expensive wars. The only thing noteworthy to us is Henry's famous speech, spoken the last time that he appeared in person in the great legislature of the country. It was a curious homily, admirably intended, indeed, but somewhat out of keeping with the sovereign's own proceedings. A few sentences from the "King's Speech" of three centuries ago, will not be unacceptable to readers accustomed to the Parliamentary eloquences of our day; and will not improbably remind them of the speeches of another illustrious Englishman, between whom and Henry VIII., not a few resemblances might be traced.

"Since I find such kindness on your part towards me, I cannot choose but love and favour you, affirming that no prince in the world more favoureth his subjects than I do you, nor any subjects love and obey their sovereign lord, than I perceive you do me, for whose defence my treasure shall not be hidden, nor, if necessity require, shall my person be unadventured. Yet, although I with you, and you with me, be in this perfect love and concord, this friendly amity cannot continue, except you, my lords temporal, and you, my lords spiritual, and you, my loving subjects, study and take pains to amend one thing, which is surely amiss, and far out of order, to the which I most heartily require you: which is, that charity and concord is not among you, but discord and dissension beareth rule in every place. I must needs judge the fault and occasion of this discord to be partly by the negligence of you, the fathers and preachers of the spiritualty. Alas! how can the poor souls live in concord, when you preachers sow amongst them in your sermons, debate and discord? Of you they look for light, and you bring them to darkness. Amend these crimes, I exhort you, and set forth God's word, both by true preaching and good example-giving; or else I, whom God hath appointed His vicar and high minister here, will see these divisions extinct,

and these enormities corrected, according to my very duty; or else I am an unprofitable servant and an untrue officer."

The temporal lords were rebuked with equal plainness for "railing on bishops, speaking slanderously of priests, rebuking and taunting preachers." He complained of the manner in which Scripture was treated, not read to inform the conscience and instruct the family, but to make it a railing and a taunting stock against priests and preachers. "I am very sorry," he added, "to know and hear how unreverently that most precious jewel, the Word of God, is disputed, rhymed, sung, and jangled in every ale-house and tavern, contrary to the true meaning and doctrine of the same; and yet I am even as much sorry that the readers of the same follow it, in doing," [in action], "so faintly and coldly."

The whole oration, indeed, is wise and weighty as if Bacon himself had uttered it, and unfolds the oft mistaken secret of Henry's religious policy. He considered himself to be, by Divine appointment, the spiritual guide of his people; and though grievously perplexed and sometimes strongly provoked by the fierce divisions and dissensions that prevailed amongst his subjects, he never abandoned the work to which, as he believed, his position called him, but continued to the last to guide and control the creed of his people. He has been accused of setting himself up as an infallible standard of truth, and virtually usurping all that the Pope had formerly claimed; but, in fact, Henry would have considered himself culpably neglecting his highest duty if he had not done so. He had faults enough, but his conduct must not be judged by mere modern ideas of toleration, or "waiting upon Providence," and "letting things take their course:" without some

[1] Foxe, vol. v. 535, etc.

serious effort to understand the principle on which he acted, no possible approximation can be made to a correct estimate of his character.

It was an unfortunate, though an inevitable, result of Henry's main principle, that persons who dared to think for themselves, and to advocate a more sweeping Reformation than he approved, should expose themselves to his indignation. Many proofs of this we have already seen; and in the last year of his reign, which we have now reached (1546), his temper, irritated by the acute illness which was hurrying him to his grave, broke out with fresh severity against some of the more zealous Reformers. Even the Queen ran some considerable risk; and, but for her great sagacity, she might have fallen a victim to Henry's suspicions, artfully excited by Gardiner's unsleeping malice. And a deep blot has been left on Henry's reign, by the cruel treatment of one of the most heroic of women, Anne Askew. A lady of good family, she had been driven from her home by her husband, who hated her for her ardent love of the Scriptures, and the doctrines of the Protestant preachers. Her brother was one of the royal body-guard; and Anne seems to have had access to the Court, where the Queen and some ladies of rank were known to be favourers of the "new learning." In the beginning of March she was arrested and examined before Christopher Dare, one of the "commissioners for heresies," and subsequently before the Lord Mayor, before Bonner's Chancellor, and finally before Bonner himself. The law of 1544 had enacted certain protections of all subjects in such cases; but, in defiance of the law, she was committed to prison, and only after some delay and after an examination, in which Bonner endeavoured in vain to commit her to an explicit denial of the Six Articles, was she released;

a bond for her forth-coming when called upon having been signed by her sureties.

Having thus disposed for the time of Anne's case, the attention of the heretic-hunters was next directed to the bold preaching of Dr. Crome; and now, at length, we shall again have Latimer before us, in documents of unquestionable authority. It is possible that, under the milder *régime* which had been introduced by the Parliament of 1544, Latimer may have ventured to return again to London. Certainly he was there in the spring of 1546, and with his characteristic fearlessness he had espoused the side of his old friend Crome, just as he stood faithfully by Barnes six years before. In the Lent of this year, Dr. Crome, preaching in the Mercers' Chapel, had attacked purgatory with an insoluble dilemma. "If," said he, "masses avail the souls in purgatory" [as the Bishops taught], "then it must have been wrong in Parliament to abolish the monasteries and chantries which had been founded and maintained for saying masses for the dead; but if, on the other hand, Parliament was right in dissolving the monasteries" [a position which it was not safe to deny], "then it was plain that masses could not be of any benefit to departed souls." The inquisitors for detecting heresy, not feeling certain how to answer the dilemma, brought the troublesome logician before the Council; and Crome, as weak in action as he was powerful in logic, yielded and recanted. From punishing Crome they proceeded to intimidate those who had supported him in his teaching; and on May 13, the Council at Greenwich wrote to Petre, "this day we look for *Latimer*, the Vicar of St. Bride's, and some others that have specially comforted Crome in his folly."[1]

[1] *State Papers*, Henry VIII., i. p. 846. The Vicar of St. Bride's was

Latimer was accordingly brought before the Council at Greenwich, on May 13, and the narrative of the proceedings, recounted by Tunstal and Gardiner, will be welcome to the reader who has so long caught mere uncertain glimpses of the great Reformer.

"We had yesterday Latimer before us," they say, after relating the story of Crome's submission, "and after a declaration made unto him that he was accused for one that had devised and counselled with Crome—he made answer that he had indeed been sundry times in his company since he was at the house of me the Lord Chancellor" [Wriothesley], "and that he had said somewhat touching his recanting or not recanting, couching his words so as he neither confessed the matter, nor yet uttered his mind so cleanly but somewhat stak and appeared by the way.

"Whereupon we ministered an oath unto him, and delivered him certain interrogatories to answer, appointing him a place for the quiet doing of the same; where, when he had answered to two or three of them, he sent unto us, desiring that he might eftsoons speak unto us, without the which, he could proceed no further in his answer. Upon which request, being much busied with the examinations of Huick, Lascelles" [who subsequently was burned along with Anne Askew], "the Vicar of St. Bride's, and the Scottish friar" [Seton, probably, or Winram], "it was ordered that I, the Bishop of Durham" [Tunstal], "and I, the controller" [Sir John Gage],[1] "should go to him, to know what he would with us: to whom making general answer that he could not proceed with his conscience till he might again speak with us, we left all the rest and sent for him. At his coming he told us he was light to swear to answer the interrogatories before he had considered them, and that charity would that some man should have put him in remembrance of this. He told us it was dangerous to answer such interrogatories, for that he might by that mean be brought into danger; noting the proceed-

John Taylor, otherwise called Cardmaker, who died a martyr in 1555. Lingard, whose history of this period is unworthy of his research, *supposes that Latimer was the Vicar of St. Bride's!* imagining that Latimer had submitted, and had been admitted by Henry to this benefice. Probably no more recklessly absurd theory has ever been maintained by any grave historian.

[1] The letter was properly a report, signed by many members of the Council, which explains this peculiar method of expression.

ings therein to be more extreme than should be ministered unto him, if he lived under the Turk as he liveth under the King's majesty" [a bold reproof of the illegal violence of the Council], "for that he said it was sore to answer for another man's fact; and besides, he said, he doubted whether it were His Highness' pleasure that he should be thus called and examined; desiring therefore to speak with His Majesty himself before he made further answer. For he was once, he said, deceived that way when he left his bishopric; being borne in hand by the Lord Cromwell that it was His Majesty's pleasure he should resign it, which His Majesty after denied and pitied his condition. And finally he said he thought there were some that had procured this against him for malice, and so descended specially to me the Bishop of Winchester" [Gardiner], "grounding himself upon two things, the one upon certain words that passed between him and me in the King's chamber at Westminster" [when Gardiner had accused Latimer of seditious preaching], "the other for that I wrote to the Lord Cromwell against a sermon that he made in the Convocation" [the famous sermon of 1536]. "Which part he engrieved much, and therein occupied a good time."

Gardiner, in fact, declared to Latimer that he was mistaken in supposing that he cherished any malice; on the contrary, says Gardiner, "I declared plainly how much I had loved, favoured, and done for his person, and that he had no cause to be offended with me, though I were not content with his doctrine:" statements which were not likely to impose upon a man so shrewd as Latimer.

The object of the Council was to prove to Latimer that he ought "to answer the interrogatories," though he had not seen them before he took his oath to answer them; and they represented to him that his bold language "touching his being in Turkey, was not used as became him." "As to the matter of the interrogatories," moreover, they said they were not captiously framed, and did not refer to doctrines but to facts, and could therefore readily be answered. And "as touching His Majesty's

pleasure that he should be called, his doubt did more injury to His Majesty than to us, in that he would enforce him to speak himself with every particular person which should be called; as though no credit should be given to His Highness's Council, or His Highness's Ministers." Thus pressed "to proceed according to his duty in the answer of the interrogatories," Latimer finally resolved to comply; but the Council found themselves overmatched by his shrewdness. "He hath since answered," they continue, "but in such sort, as we be, for the purpose, as wise almost as we were before; saving that by the same he doth so open himself as it should appear that he is as Crome was, which we shall this night know thoroughly. For this afternoon my Lord of Worcester" [Heath, who now occupied Latimer's old see] "and the rest of the Doctors talk frankly with him, in the matter of the articles" [the six bloody Articles], "to fish out the bottom of his stomach, whereby His Majesty at his coming shall see further in him; and thus we shall leave to cumber His Grace any further with him, till His Highness's coming hither."[1]

And here the curtain descends and leaves us once more to our conjectures. The examination was probably concluded in Henry's presence; and Latimer proving untractable, was remanded as a prisoner to the Tower, where he remained till the King's death. Only one more glimpse of him is afforded us during Henry's reign, and that in connection with the pious lady to whom we must now return.

Anne Askew had been liberated on bail in the end of March; in June she was summoned to appear at Greenwich, before the same section of the Privy Council that

[1] *State Papers:* Henry VIII., vol. i. p. 848.

had recently tried Latimer. Gardiner and Wriothesley took the lead in examining her, endeavouring to induce her to acknowledge that in the sacrament "there was flesh, blood, and bone." For nearly a week was this noble woman subjected to rigorous examination, and involved in metaphysical discussions with the subtle Gardiner. She was roughly threatened with the terrible death of a martyr, but she stood firmly by her own honest belief. "On the Sunday," she writes, after two days' weary debate, "I was sore sick, thinking no less than to die; therefore I desired to speak with *Master Latimer*" [then in the Tower, a prisoner], "but it would not be:"[1] the unhappy lady, so cruelly persecuted, was not allowed the consolation of an interview with the faithful preacher. The rest of her story, which has left so indelible a blot on Henry's reign, may be soon told. She was again arraigned at the Guildhall. The accusation was the same as before, and she defended herself with ability: "that which you call your God,"[2] she replied to their arguments, "it is a piece of bread; and for more proof thereof," she added, "let it but lie in the box three months, and it will be mouldy, and so turn to nothing that is good." Failing to shake her constancy, the "quest" condemned her to the flames. Even this did not satisfy her enemies, who hoped to implicate others as sharing in her opinions, and assisting her in her distress. She was sent to the Tower, therefore, where, one hopes, she may have been at last permitted some converse with Latimer. She was asked if none of the ladies of the

[1] Lingard has thought proper to say, *without any evidence*, that Latimer recanted on his examination before the Council. This request of Anne's would alone disprove his assertion. On her former examination in March, she had wished to confess to *Dr. Crome;* but he had now recanted, therefore she no longer wishes the ghostly advice of an apostate

[2] "*Receiving their Maker*" was the common phrase of the day among the Romanists, for receiving the Holy Communion.

Court had helped her, or if none of the Council (glancing at Cranmer) had maintained her. Failing to elicit any information they employed torture. The narrative must be given in her own words. "They did put me upon the rack, and thereon they kept me a long time; and because I lay still, and did not cry, my Lord Chancellor" [Wriothesley] "and Master Rich took pains to rack me with their own hands, till I was nigh dead. Then the lieutenant caused me to be loosed from the rack. Incontinently I swooned, and then they recovered me again. After that I sat two long hours, reasoning with my Lord Chancellor upon the bare floor. . . Then was I brought to a house, and laid in a bed, with as weary and painful bones as ever had patient Job."[1] All this, besides being disgraceful, was illegal; and Henry, to do him justice, though he made no effort to save the noble lady, was indignant at her being so cruelly racked.

Gardiner and Tunstal had shared in her trial, but they were in no way involved in the abominable atrocity; the whole guilt of which must fall on the head of the Lord Chancellor Wriothesley, the man who was above all others responsible for the due observance of the law, but who was a fierce haughty bigot, whom, only a few weeks after this, Henry styled a *beast*. The last scene of Anne's life was as honourable to her as all that had preceded it. She was carried to the place of execution in a chair, for her bones had been dislocated by the rack, and she could not walk; pardon was offered her if she would at the last moment recant, but she bravely answered, "I came not hither to deny my Lord and Master." The flames were kindled, and she died with firmness, "leaving behind her a singular example of Christian constancy for all men to

[1] Anne Askew's narrative in Foxe, v. 196.

follow." Three others, Lascelles, Adams, and Belenian, perished with her, greatly encouraged by her faith and fortitude.

The cause of Gardiner was thus, it will be seen, again for the time in the ascendant. The fires of martyrdom were again rekindled; and a proclamation, issued just before Anne's death, prohibited the circulation of many of the works by Fryth, Tyndale, Becon, Barnes, and others, which were most highly valued by the English Reformers.[1] Elated by his success in striking down one so near the Court as Anne Askew, Gardiner aimed at a higher victim. The Queen was notoriously a favourer of the doctrines of the Reformation; she had, in spite of her wonted discretion, given offence to Henry by presuming to defend her own religious views; "Becoming a doctor," as he phrased it, "to instruct us, and not to be instructed of us." He was indignant at "women becoming such clerks," and at the prospect of being "taught by his wife in his old age." Gardiner heard these words, and with Wriothesley and others of his party, he determined to strike terror into the Protestants of England, by procuring the death of the great patron of heresy. Catherine's life hung by a thread; but she was informed of her danger; she made her peace with her irritable lord by a piece of most ingenious flattery, assuring him that she had entered upon religious discussion with him, in order to obtain information from such a fountain of wisdom, and to beguile the pain and weariness of His Majesty's illness. The plot recoiled upon the heads of the conspirators; Wriothesley was saluted "beast, fool, knave," and Gardiner was struck out of the list of the Privy Council and of the King's executors, and was forbidden to appear

[1] See the list of prohibited books in Foxe, v. 566.

again in the royal presence. Thus the wise was at length taken in his own craftiness, and the crest-fallen bishop had leisure for some years to reflect on the saying of the wise man, "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."[1]

The other great head of the Romish party was the Duke of Norfolk; and that powerful family was next to feel the weight of Henry's vengeance. A feeling of jealousy had for some time prevailed between this chief family of the English aristocracy, and the relatives of Jane Seymour whom Henry had ennobled. In this jealousy, daily increasing in rancour, Henry, naturally enough, perceived a danger that threatened the succession of his son to the throne; and this fear once aroused, he was not likely to be slow in adopting precautions. Norfolk, and his illustrious son, the Earl of Surrey, were arrested and sent to the Tower, charged with "conspiring to take upon them the government of the kingdom during His Majesty's life, and to get the lord Prince into their hands after his death." The charge was in all probability not without foundation; but it was one which it was clearly impossible to substantiate. Henry's illness, however, was threatening; and he was determined to lose no time. Surrey, as a commoner, was tried by special commission at Guildhall, on a trumpery charge of having assumed the armorial bearings of Edward the Confessor, and thereby treasonably imperilling the established succession to the crown. The jury found him guilty, and on January 21, 1547, the axe of the executioner extinguished the flower of the poetry and chivalry of England. Norfolk, as a peer, had to be proceeded against in Parliament, by

[1] Froude thinks the whole story apocryphal; yet every contemporary writer tells it.

Bill of Attainder. The most indecent haste was used in urging on the measure, for it was known that Henry was approaching his end. The Bill was introduced into the Lords on January 18, and was passed on the 20th; the Commons returned it on the 24th; on the 27th the royal assent was given, and Norfolk's execution was fixed for the next morning at daybreak. But before daybreak Henry had gone to his great account, and Parliament did not dare to proceed to the execution of the greatest subject in the realm.

None of those about the King had the courage to warn him of his approaching dissolution until a few hours before his death. At last Sir Anthony Denny told him that all hope of human help was vain. "The King was loth to hear any mention of death, yet perceiving the same to rise upon the judgment of his physicians, and feeling his own weakness, he disposed himself more quietly to hearken to the words of his exhortation, and to consider his life past; which, although he much accused, 'Yet,' said he, 'is the mercy of Christ able to pardon me all my sins, though they were greater than they be.'"[1] Denny suggested that some learned man should be sent for to confer with him; but Henry said he would confer with no other but Cranmer, and not with him till he had reposed a little. Some hours after, Cranmer was sent for from Croydon, but Henry was too far gone to speak. He stretched out his hand to the Archbishop as he entered, and grasped him, "but could utter no word unto him, and scarce was able to make any sign." Cranmer exhorted him to put his trust in Christ, and desired him to give some token with his eyes or his hand, that he trusted in the Lord: and Henry,

[1] Foxe, v. 689.

"holding him with his hand, did wring his hand in his as hard as he could; and so, shortly after, departed."

Henry's reign extended over thirty-seven years and nine months, and is, beyond question, the most important in English history. His character has been debated for two centuries by historians; and yet, could we divest ourselves of our modern prejudices, it is on the whole, simple and easily read. That he was a man of strong will and fierce passions; that he was inclined to be tyrannical; that he was profusely extravagant; that he was by no means a model of Christian patience and meekness; all this is plain from the preceding narrative, and is not disputed by any of his biographers. But to speak of him as "one who in ferocious tyranny approached as near perfection as human weakness will permit," is to corrupt history with the heedless declamation of the rhetorician. Henry was, strange as it seems to some, a popular king, beloved by his subjects: and the reason is not difficult to discover. That very policy which modern economists reprehend as a tyrannical interference with the rights of the subjects, was what endeared him to his people; the nobles and the wealthy felt the rigour of his government; but the poor and the weak, who found in him a protector, whose strong hand was able to repress the encroachments of the rich and the great, naturally loved and admired him, as "the father of his country." His steady restraint of all freedom of opinion, and his resolute and life-long effort to dictate the creed of his subjects, are altogether alien to our modern notions; but in Henry's time they were considered, both by himself and his people, as the highest prerogative and the chief duty of a king. We condemn and shudder at his cruelty; yet contemporaries not likely to flatter—Latimer, for example—speak

highly of his courtesy and clemency. For generations, Romish writers have delighted to repeat the taunt, that the English Reformation originated in the unlawful passions of a lascivious tyrant. The taunt we have seen, in the course of this biography, is groundless. The Reformation sprang from the operation of the Word of God on the souls of some simple, honest men, who had long sought for peace elsewhere in vain. Bilney had found peace and life in the declaration of St. Paul: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;" and this God-given peace, communicated by him to other anxious souls, proved the great source in England of that blessed movement, of which Henry was not the leader, but a wayward and somewhat reluctant follower. And in his whole connection with the English Reformation Henry never appeared as leading and initiating, but rather as controlling and restraining, a movement with which he only partially sympathised. Beyond all question, however, Henry's strong hand was of considerable service to the great cause: the restraint was galling, occasionally even to such men as Cranmer and Latimer, but it made the movement the act of the great body of the intelligent part of the nation, and not merely of a single religious section. The Reformation lost, for the time, in height, but it gained in breadth: without Henry's controlling hand, a learned and zealous, but comparatively small section of the English Church, might have purged themselves more thoroughly of old Popish errors and abuses; his policy, by checking and restraining these leaders, multiplied the numbers of their followers, and gave to the Reformation a strength and a deep hold of the nation, which enabled it safely to weather the storms of the reign of Mary. However much we may censure his conduct towards his wives; however

much we may condemn the persecutions, the sanguinary violence, the many acts of legal murder which so deeply stain his reign (and no apology has been offered for any one of them in this narrative), no one who dispassionately considers his policy, or peruses the papers that proceeded from his pen; can fail to cherish a very high respect for one who was every inch a King, who was certainly one of the greatest, and was by no means one of the worst monarchs that have wielded the sceptre of England.

The Reformation, at the death of Henry, still wanted much to complete its purity in doctrine and ritual: more, however, had been accomplished in this reign, than has been always admitted by ecclesiastical historians. Instead of bewailing its deficiencies, we shall rather, with Henry's contemporaries, gratefully recognise its wonderful progress. It was thus, for example, in tones of triumph, that Thomas Becon wrote of what had been effected in Henry's time.[1]

"All false religion is now extirped and plucked up by the roots. The miserable captivity, wherewith we were oppressed in the Pope's kingdom, is turned into delectable liberty. Our consciences are restored to their old freedom. Christ's death is believed to be a sufficient sacrifice for them that are sanctified. All superstitious fantasies invented of idle brains are full godly put down. The famous images, wherewith the simple people committed fornication, I mean idolatry, are justly plucked down, and conveyed out of the way. All the monastical sects have put off their cowls and monstrous garments. Our most Christian King is now, according to the verity of God's Word, and his just and right title, recognised to be supreme head of the Church of England, next under Christ, immediately here in earth. Moreover, ignorance and blindness is exiled and banished; God's laws are manifestly declared unto us; so that we may, if we will, keep His most godly commandments. The most sacred Bible is freely permitted to be read of every man in the English tongue. Many savour Christ aright, and daily the number increaseth; thanks

[1] *Pathway to Prayer.* Published under the assumed name of Theodore Basil.

be to God. Christ is believed to be the alone Saviour; and our sufficient Mediator and Advocate. The true and Christian faith, which worketh by charity, and is plenteous in good works, is now received to justify. The Twelve Articles of the Christian Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, are now rehearsed in the English tongue, both of young and old; so that now all understand them. Many of the ecclesiastical ceremonies are now right well taught and known. To conclude, all old things are past, and new things entered into the same place instead of them."

Becon's sketch may perhaps seem too warmly coloured; but it was natural and almost laudable for him thus to write. Distant on-lookers who, without danger, behold the mortal fight, may coolly criticise its results, and hint dissatisfaction that so much has been left unaccomplished. The combatants, who have gained an unexpected victory out of the very jaws of death, may surely be excused if their gratitude for success utters itself in an exuberance of joy, which may seem altogether extravagant to critical and unimpassioned spectators.

CHAPTER VII.

Latimer under King Edward—A.D. 1547 to A.D. 1553.

The death of Henry viii. was kept secret for three days. On January 31, however, it was publicly announced; and Edward, then in his tenth year, was proclaimed King, and was crowned in Westminster Abbey on the 20th of the following month. Henry had, by his will, entrusted the direction of affairs during his son's minority to a Council of sixteen, of whom Cranmer and Tunstal, Wriothesley and the Marquis of Hertford, uncle of the young King, were leading members: Gardiner having been, to his great chagrin, expressly excluded from the number by Henry, as "a wilful man not meet to be about his son." The Council were, like the nation, divided on religious matters; and all men anxiously watched their proceedings in order to gather from them the policy likely to be pursued in reference to the Reformation. Their first act was decidedly a gain to the cause of the Reformers. They resolved to select one of their number as their spokesman and representative; and their choice naturally fell upon the Marquis of Hertford, who was accordingly proclaimed Protector of the realm, and was promoted to the rank of Duke of Somerset, the title by which he is best known in English history. A few days later, Wriothesley, the savage Chancellor, was deprived

of his office, and was ordered to confine himself within his own residence. There can be no doubt this was a very summary procedure on the part of the other members of the Council; and it is not the present writer's intention to defend the legality of all the steps taken by the Reforming party in the Council during this reign. The cause of the Reformation, and the great principles which it advocated, must be judged apart from the conduct of its adherents. The Reformers had long enough suffered under the iron hand of rigorous authority; and it was not surprising if, now that they felt they had the power, they used it occasionally with somewhat arbitrary sharpness. To the petty attempts occasionally made to represent the general procedure of the Reformers, some of whom in this reign were mere political intriguers, as marked by the same sanguinary violence that characterised their opponents, the reign of Edward furnishes an unanswerable reply. If the Reformers were guilty of some slight encroachments on the legal privileges of a few of their chief enemies, they did not at all events imbrue their hands in blood or crowd Smithfield with victims. With supreme authority in their hands for six years, not one of their most inveterate foes was consigned to the scaffold or the flames.

All waited with anxiety to see how the Council would treat the great question of the day—the progress of the Reformation. The friends of the Romish religion were already discouraged by the advancement of Somerset, and the fall of Wriothesley, their great lay champion. The Reformers were full of hope. Their party seemed in the ascendant. The young King was believed to be devotedly attached to their doctrines; and it was known to a few that even Henry had meditated a further purification of religion, which he had only been prevented from carrying into execu-

tion by his unexpected death.[1] The Council were, however, too deliberate in their movements, for the more zealous Reformers, who did not wait till the voice of the authorities was distinctly heard. On February 10, before Henry was buried, the churchwardens and curates of St. Martin's Church, in Ironmonger Lane, London, were brought before the Council for having pulled down the images of saints and the crucifix over the rood screen. Their offence was copiously discussed, and a mitigated sentence was pronounced, which was at once construed as an intimation of the course the Council were likely to pursue in reference to the Reformation.[2] Other signs of the direction in which the current was setting were not wanting. Ridley, who now began to rise into that importance which his learning and character merited, preached before the Court on Ash-Wednesday (February 23), and denounced the use of images and of holy water, as tending to perpetuate superstition and idolatry in the Church. In the provinces, too, there were the same indications of coming events. In Portsmouth, for example, the images were contemptuously plucked down and spitefully handled,[3] to the great indignation of Gardiner, the bishop of the diocese.

Latimer had been released from his imprisonment in the Tower by the general pardon, proclaimed, as usual, on the day of the King's coronation. Another occupied his bishopric, a trimming prelate, little worthy to fill the seat that Latimer had once occupied; but Latimer was not anxious to be restored to his former honours. Age and failing health rendered him averse to resuming a life of care and anxiety. He had discovered, moreover, that he was little

[1] See the important statement of Morice, Cranmer's Secretary, in Foxe, v. 562, etc.

[2] *Council Book;* Additional MSS., British Museum, No. 14,024.

[3] Gardiner's Letters in Foxe, v. 26, etc.

qualified by temperament for successfully conducting the strategic diplomacy of a bishop in those troublous times, but that God had specially endowed him as a preacher of the Gospel rather than as an administrator of ecclesiastical affairs; and, therefore, though solicited to resume his see, though entreated even by the House of Commons to return to it, he preferred to remain henceforth in private life. He continued a *quondam*, as he used humorously to call himself; thanking God that he had come by his quondamship by honest means; and reverenced by the people all the more that, in an avaricious age, he had voluntarily declined the tempting offers of wealth and honour. "He was better fitted for the pulpit than for the consistory," Heylyn has remarked with truth; and in the reign of Edward he did more real service to the Church in England by his occasional labours as a preacher, than he had done by the ceaseless anxieties of his episcopate under Henry. He had already been renowned for his eloquence as a preacher; his magnificent sermon before Convocation had touched the deepest chords in the hearts of his countrymen; but now everything conspired to make him more than ever the great preacher of the day, the admiration of almost all classes of English people. Wherever he preached crowded audiences hung upon his lips. "The character of the man," says one of his bitterest modern enemies, Dr. Lingard, "the boldness of his invectives, his quaint but animated eloquence, were observed to make a deep impression on the minds of his hearers."[1] When he preached before the Court it was found necessary to erect a pulpit in the King's garden, in order to provide accommodation for the multitudes that thronged to hear him; and on one occasion, when he preached in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster,

[1] Lingard's *History of England*, vol. vii. p. 33.

the crowd was so great that the pews were broken in pieces. In fact, whoever were the guides in the movement, Latimer was looked upon by the people as the true apostle of the English Reformation, and was recognised by all, not only as the unsparing enemy of the errors and superstitions of the Romish Church, but even more than this, as the stern denouncer of the social vices and sins of the age. For his sermons partook of that general character of his mind, which we have so often had occasion to notice. In the strictest sense of the term he was a practical preacher. We must look to Cranmer and Ridley for a full exposition of the theological teaching of the English Reformers; Latimer refers only occasionally, and never very fully or systematically, to his doctrinal tenets. The practical abuses of the Romish faith, the lying miracles, the debasing superstitions of that Church, the perversion of justice, the disregard of the legal rights of the poor, the corruption of morals, the tyranny of the nobles, the dishonesty of the traders, the indolent pride and luxury of the dignitaries of the Church—such were the chief subjects which Latimer handled in his discourses, with that plain, picturesque, shrewd humour and honesty which carried his words home to the hearts of his hearers. Such a man was a power in the State as well as a pillar of the Church. The poor looked up to him as the Israelites did to their prophets, as a protector raised up by Divine Providence to shield their weakness from the rapacity and tyranny of the rich and noble. He resided frequently with Cranmer at Lambeth, and crowds of supplicants resorted to him to entreat his aid. He could not go to his book, as he tells us, for poor folks coming to him, victims of the "law's delay," entreating him to use his influence to secure a hearing for their cases. "I am no sooner in the garden," says he in

one of the charming autobiographic sketches, happily so frequent in his sermons, "and have read awhile, but by-and-bye cometh there some one or other knocking at the gate. Anon cometh my man" [Augustine Bernher, his faithful Swiss servant], "and saith, 'Sir, there is one at the gate that would speak with you.' When I come there, then is it some one or other that desireth me that I will speak that his matter might be heard;"[1] and turning to the Protector who was present, he entreated him for the love of God to see justice promptly administered, and not provoke Divine indignation by neglecting the suits of the poor.

Latimer had been forbidden to preach, it will be remembered, by Henry VIII. in 1540. The same supreme authority that had closed his lips could alone open them; and in 1547 a licence under the ecclesiastical seal restored to him the privilege of preaching in any part of England.[2] When we come to consider the proceedings of 1548 our attention will be largely occupied with Latimer's public appearance once more as a great preacher; meantime a brief survey must first be taken of the progress of the Reformation in 1547.

The Council had at length organised their plan for proceeding with the Reformation. They resolved to act in the same spirit that Henry had adopted, not urging on matters with violent haste, but advancing slowly and cautiously, so as not to excite public commotions, and if possible to secure the adhesion of the great bulk of the people. A book of twelve Homilies was compiled, treating of the use of Scripture, the nature of faith, man's misery by sin and redemp-

[1] Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 127.

[2] State Paper Office, Edward VI., vol. ii. No. 34. Paper, entitled "The names of certain persons that have had licence to preach under the ecclesiastical seal since July, in Anno, 1547."

tion by Christ, and similar subjects;[1] with the hope of purging the minds of the people from the errors and superstitions which had so long been taught among them. Some of these were composed by Cranmer; and it has been frequently asserted that Latimer also had a share in their composition. Such a tradition is not altogether incredible; there is, however, no specific evidence in its favour, nor has any critic undertaken to assign any of the homilies to Latimer as possessing any indubitable or even probable marks of his authorship. Able and eloquent preachers, also, whose zeal for the doctrines of the Reformation was beyond question, such as Latimer, Taylor, Parker, and others, were licensed to preach in any part of the kingdom, by the direct authority of the sovereign; and thus, a second method, more efficacious than the circulation of homilies, was provided for the instruction of all the King's subjects. For the voice of the living preacher was more likely to touch the hearts of the hearers, and could not be silenced; whereas the homilies, or *homelies*, as they were sometimes derisively called, might easily be rendered inaudible or inoperative. Latimer told King Edward, in his usual quaint way, how the homilies were sometimes handled. "Though the priest read them never so well, yet if the parish like them not, there is such talking and babbling in the church that nothing can be heard; and if the parish be good and the priest naught, he will so hack it and chop it, that it were as good for them to be without it, for any word that shall be understood."[2]

It was also determined to institute a general visitation of the kingdom; and injunctions were drawn up by the Council for the guidance of the visitors. The clergy were directed to observe carefully all the laws formerly made for abolishing

[1] Printed by Grafton, July 31, 1547. [2] *Sermons*, p. 121.

the Bishop of Rome's pretended jurisdiction, and for establishing the Royal Supremacy. On these subjects they were to preach at least four times a year; and they were moreover to teach their flocks that "all goodness, health, and grace ought to be asked from God only and none other," to encourage them to works of faith, mercy, and charity, and to discourage all wandering to pilgrimages, offering of tapers, praying upon beads, and such like superstitions. Images that had been abused with pilgrimage or offerings were to be taken down. A chapter of the New Testament was to be publicly read in church every Sunday morning; one of the Old in the afternoon; and for the common benefit of the people, a copy of Erasmus's Paraphrase on the Gospels was to be provided in every church. There were to be no more processions round churches and churchyards, but the English Litany (originally intended to be said in procession) was to be said in the midst of the church before high mass. Holydays were not to be spent in debauchery and idleness, but in works of piety and charity; and in harvest-time they might be employed in the necessary labours of the season. All ceremonies not yet abrogated were to be observed; no one was obstinately or maliciously to underrate them; yet all were to be warned that even lawful ceremonies might be superstitiously debased to the peril of their soul's health. The Bishops were also ordered to see these injunctions duly observed in their dioceses; they were themselves to preach four times a year, unless they had a reasonable excuse; they were to cause their chaplains to preach, and were to exercise great care in admitting any to orders, or in allowing any to teach against the doctrines of the homilies.[1]

All these, it will be seen, were steps in the right direc-

[1] The injunctions are printed in Foxe, v. 706, etc., and frequently elsewhere.

tion. The provisions were in themselves unexceptionable; it was only to be feared that they might be slow in their operation, and that many years might elapse before the Church of England would be thoroughly brought under their influence. One grand abuse still remained untouched—the mass; but even against this great stronghold of Romish infallibility, designs were already entertained by some of the Council, the results of which we shall presently see.

The preparations completed, the visitors were sent out on their task in the end of August, just about the time when the Protector was on his march to Scotland, in the vain attempt to compel the Scots by his rough wooing to consent to the marriage of their infant Queen with the young Sovereign of England; and it was remarked by the more zealous Reformers, that on the very day in which most of the images in London were removed and destroyed by the visitors, the English army gained the memorable victory of Pinkey. It was not to be expected that these proceedings would pass unopposed. Bonner protested that he would observe the injunctions and homilies if they were not "repugnant to God's law and the statutes of this Church;" but being brought before the Council he, "upon better consideration," renounced and revoked his protestation, and entreated pardon.[1] His offence was forgiven, but "in respect of the evil ensample" that he had given, he was sent for a short time to the Fleet. Gardiner, too, was brought before the Council, and with greater courage than his more blustering brother bishop, he resolutely refused to promise an implicit reception of the injunctions; he protested against the homilies as contrary to Scripture, and objected to the accuracy of the version of Erasmus's Paraphrase that was ordered to be placed in the churches,

[1] Burnet, v. p. 162, from the *Council Book.*

forgetting in his zeal that the Gospel of St. John had been done into English by one whose orthodoxy was quite unimpeachable in his eyes—the Princess Mary. Proving quite untractable, he was sent to the Fleet and confined there for seven weeks, beguiling his leisure by writing long and ingenious controversial letters to the Protector. Gardiner's conduct was, on the whole, dignified and worthy of his position as the chief defender of the old learning. The proceedings of the Council against him were certainly summary and harsh, and would have been condemned by posterity had they not been completely thrown into the shade by his own fierce and vindictive violence in the next reign.

The Parliament assembled in November, and their legislation contributed essentially to the progress of the Reformation. All the cruel laws of Henry VIII. were formally repealed; the bloody statute of the Six Articles, already mitigated, was now abolished; the sanguinary additions to the treason acts, and even the old enactments against the Lollards were all swept away: for the Reformation, if it did not at once proclaim and practise perfect toleration, at all events signalised its accession to power by the removal of all the persecuting laws from the Statute Book. Another step still more decidedly in advance was taken in the reformation of the mass. The great body of the English Reformers were not yet prepared to abandon the incomprehensible dogmas which they had been taught from their infancy; yet they were at least convinced that the rights of the laity in the holy sacrament had been infringed, and it was plain to all who could read Scripture that the Lord's Supper was intended to be a communion, and not a solitary act of the priest. It was ordered, therefore, that in future this sacrament should be administered in both kinds; and

that the priest who celebrated should not deny the ordinance to anyone who devoutly and humbly desired it. Thus the first breach was made in that charmed circle which had hitherto surrounded the Mass as with an impregnable rampart; and there was every reason to hope that still bolder advances might be made in succeeding years.

With 1548 Latimer's active career as a preacher was resumed. "On January 1," says Stow, in his chronicle, "Doctor Latimer preached at Paul's Cross, which was the first sermon by him preached in almost eight years before; for at the making of the Six Articles, he, being Bishop of Worcester, would not consent unto them, and therefore was commanded to silence, and gave up his bishopric. He also preached at Paul's Cross on January 8, where he affirmed that whatsoever the clergy commanded ought to be obeyed but he also declared that the" [true] "clergy are such as sit in Moses' chair and break not their Master's commandment, adding nothing thereto nor taking anything therefrom; and such a clergy must be obeyed of all men, both high and low. He also preached at Paul's on the fifteenth and on the twenty-ninth of January." Fortunately we know something more of this famous series of sermons than appears in the meagre summary of the simple chronicler. The last of the four has been preserved, and is well known to all lovers of English literature as the *Sermon of the Plough*. On the whole there is, perhaps, no better specimen extant of Latimer's style of preaching. The train of thought is more continuously sustained than in most of his sermons, while there is the same earnestness, the same honest condemnation, not of errors in opinion merely, but of sins in action, the same wit, the same quaint felicity of expression, the same power of apt and familiar illustration, the same discursiveness when any practical duty could be

enforced, that mark all his best sermons. These were the virtues that charmed his audience in those days; and three centuries have not deprived them of their power to touch all honest and intelligent readers. The *Sermon of the Plough* has been so frequently reprinted as to be almost hackneyed; yet in a biography of Latimer it would be inexcusable to omit altogether some extracts from so characteristic a specimen of his eloquence as a preacher.

"I liken preaching," said he in his homely way, "to a ploughman's labour, and a prelate to a ploughman. But now you will ask me whom I call a prelate. A prelate is that man, whosoever he be, that hath a flock to be taught of him; whosoever hath any spiritual charge in the faithful congregation, and whosoever he be that hath cure of souls. And well may the preacher and the ploughman be likened together: first, for their labour at all seasons of the year; for there is no time of the year in which the ploughman hath not some special work to do: as in my country, in Leicestershire, the ploughman hath a time to set forth and to assay his plough, and other times for other necessary works to be done. And then they also may be likened together for the diversity of works and variety of offices that they have to do. For as the ploughman first setteth forth his plough, and then tilleth his land, and breaketh it in furrows, and sometime ridgeth it up again; and at another time harroweth it and clotteth it, and sometime dungeth it and hedgeth it, diggeth it and weedeth it, purgeth and maketh it clean; so the prelate, the preacher, hath many diverse offices to do. He hath first a busy work to bring his parishioners to a right faith, as Paul calleth it, and not a swerving faith; to a faith that embraceth Christ and trusteth to His merits; a lively faith, a justifying faith, a faith that maketh a man righteous, without respect of works, as ye have it very well declared and set forth in the Homily" [that Homily on Faith, viz., which Gardiner had condemned]. "He hath then a busy work, I say, to bring his flock to a right faith, and then to confirm them in the same faith; now casting them down with the law, and with threatenings of God for sin; now ridging them up again with the Gospel, and with the promises of God's favour; now weeding them, by telling them their faults, and making them forsake sin; now clotting them, by breaking their stony hearts, and by making them supple-hearted, and making them to

have hearts of flesh, that is, soft hearts, and apt for doctrine to enter in: now teaching to know God rightly, and to know their duty to God and their neighbours: now exhorting them, when they know their duty, that they do it, and be diligent in it; so that they have a continual work to do. Great is their business, and therefore great should be their hire. They have great labours, and therefore they ought to have good livings, that they may commodiously feed their flock; for the preaching of the Word of God unto the people is called meat: Scripture calleth it *meat*, not strawberries that come but once a year, and tarry not long, but are soon gone: but it is meat, it is no dainties. The people must have meat that must be familiar, and continual, and daily given unto them to feed upon. Many make a strawberry of it, ministering it but once a year, but such do not the office of good prelates. For Christ saith, 'Who think you is a wise and a faithful servant? He that giveth meat in due time.' So that he must at all times convenient preach diligently: therefore saith He, 'Who trow ye is a faithful servant?' He speaketh it as though it were a rare thing to find such a one, and as though He should say, there be but a few of them to find in the world. And how few of them there be throughout this realm that give meat to their flock as they should do, the Visitors can best tell" [those appointed by the late injunctions]. "Too few, too few; the more is the pity, and never so few as now! . . . .

"How then hath it happened that we have had so many hundred years so many unpreaching prelates, lording loiterers, and idle ministers? Ye would have me here to make answer, and to show the cause thereof. Nay, this land is not for me to plough: it is too stony, too thorny, too hard for me to plough. They have so many things that make for them, so many things to lay for themselves, that it is not for my weak team to plough them. They have to lay for themselves long customs, ceremonies and authority, placing in parliament, and many things more. And I fear me this land is not yet ripe to be ploughed: for, as the saying is, it lacketh weathering: this gear lacketh weathering: at least way it is not for me to plough. For what shall I look for among thorns, but pricking and scratching? What among stones but stumbling? What, I had almost said, among serpents, but stinging? But this much I dare say, that since lording and loitering hath come up, preaching hath come down, contrary to the apostles' time: for *they*" [the apostles] "preached and lorded not, and now they" [Latimer's contemporaries] "lord and preach not. For they that be lords will ill go

to plough: it is no meet office for them; it is not seeming for their estate. Thus came up lording loiterers: thus crept in unpreaching prelates; and so have they long continued. For how many unlearned prelates have we now at this day! And no marvel: for if the ploughmen that now be were made lords, they would clean give over ploughing: they would leave off their labour, and fall to lording outright, and let the plough stand: and then both ploughs not walking, nothing should be in the commonweal but hunger."

These were bold words, such as no preacher had ever before ventured to use; but even these were outdone, when Latimer warming with the excitement of his subject, launched out into that famous flow of indignant eloquence, which has always been considered as one of the most magnificent achievements of English oratory.

"And now I would ask a strange question: who is the most diligentest bishop and prelate in all England, that passeth all the rest in doing his office? I can tell, for I know him who it is; I know him well. But now I think I see you listening and hearkening that I should name him. There is one that passeth all the other, and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you: it is the devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all other: he is never out of his diocese; he is never from his cure; ye shall never find him unoccupied; he is ever in his parish; he keepeth residence at all times; ye shall never find him out of the way; call for him when you will he is ever at home, the diligentest preacher in all the realm; he is ever at his plough; no lording or loitering can hinder him; he is ever applying his business: ye shall never find him idle I warrant you. And his office is to hinder religion, to maintain superstition, to set up idolatry, to teach all kind of Popery. He is ready as he can be wished for to set forth his plough, to devise as many ways as can be to deface and obscure God's glory. Where the devil is resident and hath his plough going, there away with books, and up with candles; away with Bibles, and up with beads; away with the light of the Gospel, and up with the light of the candles, yea, at noon-days. Where the devil is resident that he may prevail, up with all superstition and idolatry, censing, painting of images, candles, palms, ashes, holy water, and new service of men's inventing, as though

man could invent a better way to honour God with than God Himself hath appointed: down with Christ's cross, up with purgatory-pick-purse, up with him, the Popish purgatory, I mean: Away with clothing the naked, the poor and impotent; up with decking of images, and gay garnishing of stocks and stones: up with man's traditions and his laws; down with God's traditions and His most Holy Word. Down with the old honour due to God, and up with the new god's honour. Let all things be done in Latin: there must be nothing but Latin, not so much as *memento homo quod cinis es, et in cinerem reverteris*, 'remember, man, that thou art ashes, and into ashes thou shalt return,' which be the words that the minister speaketh unto the ignorant people, when he giveth them ashes upon Ash-Wednesday; but it must be spoken in Latin, God's Word may in no wise be translated into English.

"Oh that our prelates would be as diligent to sow the corn of good doctrine, as Satan is to sow cockle and darnel! And this is the devilish ploughing, the which worketh to have things in Latin, and letteth" [hindereth] "the fruitful edification. . . . There never was such a preacher in England as he is. Who is able to tell his diligent preaching, which, every day and every hour, laboureth to sow cockle and darnel, that he may bring out of form and out of estimation and room, the institution of the Lord's Supper and Christ's cross? . . . . This is the mark at the which the devil shooteth, to evacuate" [make of no effect] "the cross of Christ, and to mingle" [confuse] "the institution of the Lord's Supper: and these fifteen hundred years he hath been a doer, only purposing to evacuate Christ's death, and to make it of small efficacy and virtue. For whereas Christ, according as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, so would He Himself be exalted, that thereby as many as trusted in Him should have salvation; but the devil would none of that: they" [the Romanists] "would have us saved by a daily oblation propitiatory, by a sacrifice expiatory, or remissory. But Christ is a continual sacrifice in effect, fruit, operation and virtue; as though He had from the beginning of the world, and continually should to the world's end, hang still on the cross; and He is as fresh hanging on the cross now, to them that believe and trust in Him, as he was fifteen hundred years ago, when He was crucified. Then let us trust upon His only death, and look for none other sacrifice propitiatory, than the same bloody sacrifice, the lively sacrifice; and not the dry sacrifice, but a bloody sacrifice. . . . What have we to do then but to eat in the Lord at His Supper? What other service

have we to do to Him, and what other sacrifice have we to offer but the mortification of our flesh? What other oblation have we to make, but of obedience, of good living, of good works, and of helping our neighbours? But as for our redemption, it is done already, it cannot be better: Christ hath done that thing so well, that it cannot be amended. It cannot be devised how to make that any better than he hath done it. But the devil, by the help of that Italian bishop yonder, his chaplain, hath laboured by all means that he might, to frustrate the death of Christ and the merits of His passion. And they have devised for that purpose to make us believe in other vain things by his pardons; as to have remission of sins for praying on hallowed beads; for drinking of the bakehouse bowl, as a canon of Waltham Abbey once told me, that whensoever they put their loaves of bread into the oven, as many as drank of the pardon-bowl should have pardon for drinking of it. A mad thing to give pardon to a bowl! to Pope Alexander's holy water, to hallowed bells, palms, candles, ashes, and what not! And of these things every one hath taken away some part of Christ's sanctification; every one hath robbed some part of Christ's passion and cross, and hath mingled Christ's death, and hath been made to be propitiatory and satisfactory, and to put away sin. . . . Wo worth thee, O devil, that hast prevailed to evacuate Christ's cross, and to mingle the Lord's Supper." . . .

Words like these would stir the hearts of men even in the dullest and most common-place days; and in a time of fierce controversy and wild religious excitement these sermons of Latimer shook the whole land. No more effectual instrument could be employed for preparing the minds of the people for a further purification of the abuses that were still left, and for weakening the hold which the old faith still retained over the belief and the imagination of a large portion of the population. Dry logic and correct exegesis might fall idle upon the mind; but words like Latimer's carried force and conviction with them. It will not have escaped the observation of the careful reader that Latimer's long seclusion from public labours had materially assisted in purging his own creed from many

superstitious notions, which he had formerly been willing to tolerate as harmless, but which he now emphatically denounced as in truth "robbing some part of Christ's passion and cross." More than this, the extracts here given show plainly that his opinions on the subject of the mass had undergone a mighty change; transubstantiation he still, for a few months longer maintained; but that grand Romish invention which made the mass a propitiatory sacrifice, and which had invested it with so much awe and sanctity, he discarded as a plain "frustrating of the cross of Christ."

Such sermons could not be like water spilt upon the ground: what comfort and peace and edification they ministered to many perplexed hearts cannot be estimated; but they have left a plain broad mark on the history of England. He had denounced the superstitious regard for hallowed candles: on Candlemas-day of the year after his sermon, "candles were left off" by proclamation of the Council. He had ridiculed the reverence for "hallowed palms:" on Palm-Sunday it was forbidden to carry palms. He had specially laughed at the solemn ceremony of giving ashes on Ash-Wednesday: on Ash-Wednesday the ceremony was disused. He had condemned images: and the Council issued a peremptory order that all images should be removed from churches, whether they had been abused to superstitious purposes or not. He had characterised the use of an unknown Latin tongue in the service of the church as a signal proof of the influence of the devil, and in March there was issued by royal authority an "Order of the Communion" in the *English* language,[1] retaining, it is true, the rites and ceremonies of the mass, yet pro-

[1] It is printed entire in *Liturgies of Edward VI.*, published by the Parker Society.

mising a future reformation even of these, and embodying the substance of those pious exhortations which still remain as the chief beauty of the English Communion Service. Some of these changes may have been suggested by Latimer's preaching; all of them were unquestionably promoted and facilitated by the great influence which his eloquence gave him over the people.

There was not in England at that time a more ardent lover of the Reformation than the young King, and it was natural that the great preacher whose burning words had so animated the minds of the common people, should be asked to preach before the Court. Ample provision was made for the audience which the fame of the preacher's eloquence was expected to draw together, as will be seen from the words of the old chronicler whom we have already quoted. "The seventh of March, being Wednesday, was a pulpit set up in the King's privy-garden at Westminster, and therein Doctor Latimer preached before the King, where he might be heard of more than four times so many people as could have stood in the King's chapel, and this was the first sermon preached there." "In the same place of the inward garden," says Foxe, "which was before applied to lascivious and courtly pastimes, there Latimer dispensed the fruitful word of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ, preaching there before the King and his whole Court, to the edification of many."[1] The words of the chronicler will call up before the eyes of many readers the quaint old print, often engraved, in which Latimer standing on an architectural tribune, and surrounded on all sides by a sea of heads, addresses himself especially to the young King, who listens from a window of the palace. To us who have followed Latimer in his whole career as a

[1] Foxe, vol. vii. 463.

preacher it is unnecessary to prove that his sermon, or series of sermons (for he preached all the Wednesdays in Lent), would be carefully suited to the character of his audience. When he preached at Paul's Cross, before an audience mainly clerical, he naturally animadverted upon the faults and vices of the clergy of his day: and at Westminster, before an audience of courtiers, he, as naturally, would make the sins and vices of the rich and great his chief themes. His sermons, on this occasion, before the Court have not been preserved, less fortunate in this respect than those of the succeeding Lent; we know their great subject, however, and are not altogether ignorant of their results. "The first Lent that I preached here," says Latimer in the last sermon he delivered before the Court in 1550, "I preached *restitution*." It was a favourite theme with Latimer, and we know well how he would treat it, for he often recurs to it in his sermons that have been preserved. Thus, in one of his sermons on the Lord's Prayer he makes the following terse remarks:—"You will say, what shall we do with the goods gotten by unlawful means? Marry, I tell you make restitution, which is the only way that pleaseth God. I tell you, none of them which have taken their neighbour's goods from him by any manner of falsehood, none of them, I say, shall be saved, except they make restitution, either in affect" [intention] "or effect; in effect, when they be able; in affect, when they be not able in no wise. For unlawful goods ought to be restored again: without restitution look not for salvation."[1] Only a bold preacher would have ventured on a doctrine so certain to be unpalatable to an audience, almost every one of whom had stained his hands with ill-gotten goods: and we may rest assured that the preacher

[1] Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 404.

did not extenuate the guilt of peculation or sacrilege, or represent restitution as a duty of a secondary nature which might without sin be omitted or postponed. His sermons, of course, gave offence.

"Restitution," said some (to resume Latimer's own account of the matter); "what should he preach of restitution? Let him preach of contrition," quoth they, "and let restitution alone; we can never make restitution." "Then," added the stern preacher, "if thou wilt not make restitution, thou shalt go to the devil for it. Now choose thee either restitution, or else endless damnation. There be two manner of restitutions; secret restitution, and open restitution; whether of both it be, so that restitution be made, it is all good enough. At my first preaching of restitution, one good man took remorse of conscience, and acknowledged himself to me, that he had deceived the King; and willing he was to make restitution: and so the first Lent came to my hands twenty pounds to be restored to the King's use. I was promised twenty pound more the same Lent, but it could not be made, so that it came not. Well, the next Lent came three hundred and twenty pounds more; I received it myself and paid it to the King's Council. . . . Well, now this Lent came one hundred and fourscore pounds ten shillings, which I have paid and delivered this day to the King's Council."[1]

The person here alluded to by Latimer as having been so deeply impressed by his sermons on restitution, was the famous martyr, John Bradford. This has been sometimes called in question; but Bradford's own writings place it absolutely beyond all doubt. Bradford had been employed abroad during the French wars, and had in some way or other been implicated in a transaction by which the King

[1] The following are the entries in the *Council Book*:—"28 March, 1549. This day Sir Michael Stanhop, Knight, by commandment and order of the Lord Protector's Grace and Council, received of Mr. Latymer of such the King's money as came of concealment and now delivered by the exhortation of the said Mr. Latymer, the sum of £323 pounds."

"Monday, 10 March, 1550. Mr. Doctor Latymer brought in £180 into the Council Chamber which he had recovered of one that had concealed the same from the King's Majesty."—British Museum. Additional MSS. 14,024, and 14,025.

was defrauded of a considerable sum of money. He was in London in the spring of 1548, his mind deeply impressed and anxious for a full knowledge of the truth of the Gospel. In such circumstances Latimer's sermons struck him to the heart; and he went to the preacher to ask advice how he should proceed in the discharge of his great duty of restitution. By Latimer's advice, he wrote to the person under whom he had served abroad, and who had been chiefly concerned in the fraud, and warned him that unless restitution was made, he would surrender to the Lord Protector, and confess the whole matter to the Council. A satisfactory arrangement was concluded, the result of which was that Latimer, as he states, received twenty pounds of conscience money in Lent, 1548; three hundred and twenty pounds in Lent, 1549, and one hundred and eighty pounds ten shillings in Lent, 1550, which he paid over to the Council.[1] His influence over Bradford did not terminate here; for he was not only, to use Fuller's quaint words, the "corban or treasury into which restored ill-gotten goods were cast," but was also "confessor-general to all Protestants troubled in mind." He saw Bradford's eminent qualifications for the work of the Christian ministry, for which it was then so desirable to procure suitable labourers; and it was by his advice, we may conclude, that Bradford determined to leave London for Cambridge, and prepare himself by assiduous study for the work of a minister of Christ's Gospel. Of his eminent success, his piety, his resolution, his glorious faithfulness even unto death, we need not speak; his name and his history are still held in honour by all Englishmen. If Latimer's Lenten sermons did no more than gain over Bradford to the cause of the Reformation and the practice

[1] Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 262: Bradford's letters in Foxe, vii.

of true godliness, they would be for ever memorable in the history of the English Reformation.

One other incident connected with these sermons has been preserved to us in a somewhat unexpected manner. It was customary for the sovereign to present to the preacher on such an occasion, a sum of money by way of compliment, or *honorarium*. We have already seen Latimer thus rewarded by Henry; but Edward was scantily supplied with money by his uncle Somerset, and neither knew what to give Latimer, nor where to procure the necessary reward. This enforced poverty of the young King had not escaped the notice of his other uncle, the Lord Seymour (who had married Catherine Parr with indecorous haste two months after Henry's death); and it was at once turned to advantage by that ambitious nobleman, who was plotting to deprive his brother of his power. Seymour, accordingly, through some of his creatures, granted Edward liberal supplies of money; his liberality costing him nothing, as his purse was well stocked by very reprehensible practices. Shortly after Latimer had finished his course of sermons, the following brief note, penned by the young King, on a shabby scrap of paper, was forwarded to Seymour:—

"My Lord,—Send me for *Latimer* as much as ye think good, and deliver it to Fowler" [the go-between].

"Edward."[1]

In the ordinary course of things the reply to this very laconic request would not have been preserved, for of course no record was kept of expenses supplied from such clandestine sources. Next spring, however, Seymour was attainted of treason; his habit of giving money to corrupt

[1] State Paper Office: printed also by Tytler, vol. i. p. 112.

the King's servants was one of the articles against him, and he admitted that "what time Mr. Latymer preached before the King, the King sent to know what he should give Mr. Latymer, and he sent him £40, with this word, that £20 was a good reward for Mr. Latymer, and the other he might bestow among his servants."[1] Twenty pounds was, indeed, a right royal recompense of Latimer's labour, and would be a very acceptable gift to the preacher, who had not, at this time, so far as can be ascertained, any regular source of income. "Not that he was kept bare," according to "the loud lie of Parsons;"[2] the Council in 1549, in recognition of his services in recovering the money of which the King had been defrauded, appointed £50 of the recovered money "to be paid to him by way of the King's reward;"[3] and this sum would long supply his simple wants. Cranmer's purse would also, of course, be open to him, as his heart and his palace were; and there were many other kind friends who would gladly minister to his necessities. At all events, he himself declares on this subject, "I thank God and the King, I have sufficient." "I have enough, and I need not beg; I would every preacher were as well provided as myself through this realm."[4]

In April of this year we find Latimer, along with Cranmer, Sir Thomas Smith, Richard Cox, and some others, appointed by Royal Commission to sit for the trial of heretics.[5] The doctrines of the Anabaptists had made not a few converts, especially among the lower, more

[1] Seymour's Answers to the Articles; *Council Book.*

[2] Fuller, *Church History.*

[3] *Council Book;* there are also smaller payments on August 7, and September 22, 1549, to "Latimer," but they may not have been to *our* Latimer. On Palm Sunday, 1549, he received the customary gift of twenty shillings. Nichol's *Literary Remains of Edward VI.*

[4] Latimer's *Sermons*, pp. 100, 192.

[5] Strype's *Cranmer.*

ignorant classes, who, by a natural re-action passed from one extreme class of opinions to the other extreme. One John Champneys, of Stratford-le-Bow, was brought before the Commissioners charged with teaching some of the customary tenets of the Anabaptists, and, in particular, that of the absolute sinlessness of the regenerate. An effort was made to argue him out of his erroneous opinions, for the Commissioners had no wish to adopt any harsh measures; he was induced to abjure, and was dismissed, with the injunction that on the following Sunday he should bear a faggot at Paul's Cross, standing with it penitently on his shoulder during the sermon.[1] In December, also, of the same year, a still more daring heretic was brought before them at Lambeth, a priest who denied the divinity of Christ; but he, too, without the employment of any rigorous severity, was induced to recant his errors and to submit to the penance imposed upon him.

But Cranmer and Latimer had more congenial occupation at Lambeth than the prosecution and punishment of heretics. The prospects, and the projects of the Reformation would engross their thoughts, almost to the exclusion of any other subject. Edward had only occupied the throne some twenty months, and already several important steps had been taken towards perfecting the Reformation of the Church in England. In all these, Cranmer had been the prime mover; but what had been accomplished was merely a fragment of the grand and truly noble plan which that liberal and Christian prelate had for years contemplated, even under the less promising *régime* of Henry, and which he now gladly resumed under happier auspices and with brighter prospects of success. It is due to one who has not been sufficiently appreciated to allow

[1] Strype's *Cranmer*, vol. i., p. 254, from Cranmer's *Regis'er*.

him to state his splendid design in his own words :—"We are desirous," he writes to John a Lasco, one of the German Reformers, "of setting forth in our churches the true doctrine of God, and have no wish to adapt it to all tastes, or to deal in ambiguities; but, laying aside all carnal considerations, to transmit to posterity a true and explicit form of doctrine agreeable to the rule of the sacred writings; so that there may not only be set forth *among all nations* an illustrious testimony respecting our doctrine, delivered by the grave authority of learned and godly men, but that all posterity may have a pattern to imitate. For the purpose of carrying this important design into execution we have thought it necessary to have the assistance of learned men, who, having compared their opinions together with us, may do away with all doctrinal controversies, and build up an entire system of true doctrine."[1] Cranmer's pious hope was that he might be able, with the help of some of the learned Continental Reformers, to institute a great and truly Catholic Reformed Church, which would include, in one comprehensive but strictly evangelical and scriptural system of doctrine, all the Reformed Churches in Europe, and would thus prove an insuperable barrier against the encroachments of the Church of Rome. Most of the illustrious Reformed Continental divines were accordingly invited to England. Melanchthon, obviously the person best qualified by learning and temperament to further Cranmer's views, was repeatedly invited, but was unfortunately unable to come. Bucer, however, came, and Peter Martyr, and Paul Fagius, and John a Lasco, and others; ample provision was made for their entertainment in England; and Lambeth Palace became the hospitable haven open at all times to every one who had learning and

[1] *Zurich Letters*, p. 17: dated July 4, 1548.

piety to recommend him. Further reformations in the Church of England were contemplated; a commission of divines was employed in revising and purifying the service-books of the Church; and the influence of the Continental divines, operating through Cranmer and others of the English Reformers, contributed essentially to the removal of the one great blot that remained in the Creed of the English Church. To Latimer, this familiar intercourse with the learning and piety of other lands, must have afforded a pleasure almost too deep for expression. One delights to picture him walking in the sunny gardens of the rich old palace, discoursing of that glorious vision, too bright alas! for those evil days, of a pure, reformed, apostolical Church which should reunite divided Christendom in the indissoluble bonds of a scriptural creed, an edifying ritual, and an active charity. It was a vision too bright to be realised, although the hope of such a Church in the future is still the consolation of all true disciples of Christ; but it was surely only in the noblest minds that such a glorious vision could find a place; and, while it lasted, it must have seemed an anticipation of the great promised Millennium, and almost a foretaste of heaven.

One important and abiding result of this free converse with the Continental Reformers, was the abandonment by both Latimer and Cranmer of their deep-rooted belief in transubstantiation; a change of opinion which may be assigned with most probability to September of this year.

"As to Latimer," writes Traheron (one of the former students at Cardinal College), "though he does not clearly understand the true doctrine of the eucharist, he is nevertheless more favourable than either Luther or Bucer. I am quite sure that he will never be a hindrance to this cause; for, being a man of admirable talent, he sees more clearly into the subject than the others" [he means Cranmer especially, but even the most enthusiastic admirer of Latimer must

demur to the justice of this eulogy], "and is desirous to come into our sentiments, but is slow to decide, and cannot without much difficulty and even timidity renounce an opinion which he has once imbibed. But there is good hope that he will some time or other come over to our side altogether; for he is so far from avoiding any of our friends, that he rather seeks their company, and most anxiously listens to them while discoursing upon this subject, as one who is beyond measure desirous that the whole truth may be laid open to him, and even that he may be thoroughly convinced."[1]

This much Traheron was able to write to Bullinger on August 1; on September 28 he announced to the same correspondent—

"Latimer has come over to our opinion respecting the true doctrine of the eucharist, together with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the other bishops, who heretofore seemed Lutherans."[2]

Traheron was not, indeed, quite accurate in all his information; for neither Cranmer nor Latimer ever held the opinions of the Lutheran divines on the communion; but there is no doubt that it was about this time they both abandoned that last great article of their old Romish creed to which they had so long adhered, in spite of the many arguments which were directed against it from Scripture, from reason, and from antiquity.

At the close of this year, 1548, a number of eminent prelates and divines were busily occupied at Windsor in revising the whole of the service books of the Church, in order to prepare a Book of Common Prayer for general use in the English language. Latimer was not amongst them; such a work was not much in accordance with his temperament; he had no special qualifications for assisting in it; and his age would naturally disincline him from what must have been to him a tedious labour. When Parliament met in November, the discussion of this first English Liturgy

[1] *Zurich Letters*, p. 320. [2] Ibid., p. 322.

was the chief business that occupied their attention. Long debates ensued, and it was two months before the book was assented to in the Lords', and received the royal sanction. The subject of the eucharist was, almost of necessity, the chief difficulty; and the House of Lords was converted for some days into a debating school, where the most mysterious points in theology were discussed with such zeal and learning that the members of the House of Commons came in crowds to listen to the disputations.[1] Bonner and Tunstal were the chief champions of the Romish opinions, Gardiner having been again imprisoned, in a somewhat arbitrary manner, for some offences alleged to have been committed by him in a sermon preached on St. Peter's Day (June 29). The great defender of the Reformed doctrine on the communion was Cranmer, the man whom the Romish party had been accustomed to traduce as "ignorant of theology, and only conversant with matters of government; but whom they now found, to their experience, to possess great learning and admirable skill in debate."[2]

It is not within the province of this biography to enter upon any discussion of the merits of the English Book of Common Prayer. Its grave and solemn words, mingling so often in beautiful cadence with the deepest emotions of those who utter them, consecrated by the reverence of so many generations, blending the pious aspirations of many lands and many centuries, have done more to mould the religious life of Englishmen than any uninspired book. In the endless controversies, within and without the Church of England, which have been waged about the doctrinal teaching and the public ritual of the Prayer Book, its real history has often been forgotten, and its true value in con-

[1] Peter Martyr to Martin Bucer, *Zurich Letters*, p. 469.
[2] *Zurich Letters*, p. 469.

sequence erroneously appreciated. The Reformation in England had a specific character of its own. It was not, as in some other countries, a species of religious rebellion carried to a successful issue by the uprising of popular strength against opposing authority; there was no abrupt termination of the old order of things, no levelling to the dust of the former structure to clear the way for a new erection entirely different. In England the movement was in the strictest sense a *Re*formation; it was conducted from first to last, not in defiance of the ordinary authorities, but with their sanction and co-operation; there was no sharp line of demarcation between the old and the new, but an unbroken continuity; nothing that was old was abolished, except what was incompatible with the new; the old foundations of the great national ecclesiastical edifice remained, and much of the old ornaments and the original plan, but what was incongruous, what had been found to be dangerous, was as far as possible removed. Of this peculiar feature in the history of the English Reformation, the source of its weakness according to some writers, but the secret of its strength according to others, the Book of Common Prayer is at once the product and the exact reflection; and any criticism of that book which overlooks this fact is utterly inept. Nothing is more certain than that any attempt to reform the Church in England after the pattern of the Churches in Scotland or Switzerland, would in the days of Henry or Edward have proved an utter failure: it would have been summarily trampled out in a week, and could only have tended to produce a reaction in favour of the old corruptions of the Church of Rome. To some extent Cranmer's hopes from his labours were disappointed: the Prayer Book, compiled with so much sedulous care, has not been received by all classes of his Protestant country-

men as a manual of devotion in accordance with their opinions; yet the high esteem in which it has been held by many generations of Englishmen, scattered over every quarter of the globe, must be considered as an ample reward of the pious labours of the good Archbishop.

The same Parliament which sanctioned the Prayer Book in the spring of 1549, also relaxed the laws against the marriage of the clergy, and thenceforward the law of England declared with the Apostle that "marriage was honourable in all." The measure was not carried without a long and formidable opposition; celibacy had been so long the practice that marriage seemed almost a perilous innovation, and notwithstanding the many vices to which an enforced celibacy had led, and which the diligent inquiries of the various visitors had brought to light, there were not a few who wished to retain it from a confused idea of its peculiar sanctity.

On January 8, 1549, the House of Commons moved an address to the Protector Somerset, requesting him to restore Latimer to his former bishopric of Worcester;[1] but Latimer preferred to remain in his new career of usefulness, convinced that he was more effectually promoting that cause which he had so long loved, as "the King's preacher," than as the Bishop of Worcester. It must not be imagined that he surrendered himself to that ease to which his age and his long services might have so justly entitled him.

"He preached for the most part every Sunday twice, not to speak of his indefatigable travail and diligence in his own private studies, who, notwithstanding both his years and other pains in preaching, every morning ordinarily, winter and summer, about two of the clock in the morning, was at his book most diligently: so careful was his heart of the preservation of the Church and the good success of the Gospel.'[2]

[1] *Journals of the House of Commons.*

[2] Foxe, vii. 463; and Bernher's Dedication in Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 320.

Latimer was again appointed to preach before Edward this year, on the Fridays in Lent, and these sermons—"the famous Friday sermons" as they were called, were noted down by an ardent admirer and printed, being the only sermons of Latimer's that were printed during his lifetime, except the sermon before the Convocation and that on the Plough, which we have already noticed. These sermons, according to his custom, were carefully adapted to the audience whom he addressed, treating of their duties, and rebuking their vices with the unsparing zeal of one of the Jewish prophets. Indeed, the people had come to look upon him as raised up and specially endowed by God, and almost gifted with the powers of the old prophets to predict the future evils that were coming on the country. "If England ever had a prophet," was the common saying, "he was one." "Moses, Jeremiah, and Elias," it was remarked, "did never declare the true message of God to their rulers and people with a more sincere spirit, faithful mind, and godly zeal than godly Latimer."

A few extracts from these sermons will enable modern readers to judge for themselves of that honest zeal which excited so lively an admiration amongst our ancestors.

Hear, for example, with what boldness he denounces the vice, then so prevalent, of receiving bribes to prevent justice.

"'Thy princes are rebellious,' said Isaiah to the Jews, 'they are companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards; they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come before them.' Isaiah calleth princes thieves," said the English prophet to the great men of England. "What! princes thieves? What a seditious harlot was this![1] Was he worthy to live in a commonwealth that would call princes on this wise—fellows of thieves? Had they a standing at Shooter's-hill or Standgate-hole,

[1] *Harlot*, like *virgin*, was used by the old writers as of both sexes, and not as in modern times limited to the female.

to take a purse? Why? Did they stand by the highway side? Did they rob, or break open any man's house or door? No, no; that is a gross kind of thieving. They were princes; they had a prince-like kind of thieving: *omnes diligunt munera*, 'they all love bribes.' Bribery is a princely kind of thieving. They will be waged by the rich, either to give sentence against the poor, or to put off the poor man's causes. This is the noble theft of princes and of magistrates. They are bribe-takers. Now-a-days they call them gentle rewards; let them leave their colouring, and call them by their Christian name, bribes. 'They all love bribes;' all the princes, all the judges, all the priests, all the rulers are bribers. What? Were all the magistrates in Jerusalem all bribe-takers? None good? No doubt there were some good. This word *all* signifieth the most part; and so there be some good, I doubt not of it, in England. But yet we be far worse than those stiff-necked Jews; for we read of none of them that winced or kicked against Esay's preaching, or said that he was a seditious fellow. . . . Wo worth these gifts! they subvert justice everywhere. 'They follow bribes:' somewhat was given to them before, and they must needs give somewhat again; for Giffe-gaffe was a good fellow,—this Giffe-gaffe led them clean from justice.

"A good fellow on a time bade another of his friends to a breakfast, and said, 'If you will come, you shall be welcome; but I tell you aforehand, you shall have but slender fare—one dish, and that is all.' 'What is that?' said he. 'A pudding. and nothing else.' 'Marry,' said he, 'you cannot please me better; of all meats, that is for mine own tooth: you may draw me round about the town with a pudding.' These bribing magistrates and judges follow gifts faster than the fellow would follow the pudding."

This, it will be seen, is a specimen of the plain, broad, almost comic humour in which Latimer occasionally indulged, and which rendered his bold denunciations all the more effective. The reign of a minor has always afforded scope to the ambitious and intriguing; many vices grow in luxuriant strength, which a stronger hand would have repressed; and the minority of Edward VI. was marked, as all authorities agree, by a scandalous corruption of morals among the higher classes, and by an open disregard of justice on the part of judges. Such vices in high places

often enough escape the condemnation which they deserve; the preacher, who ought to be the defender of the poor, is often awed or bribed into silence, and even when he speaks, he often lacks the necessary earnestness and force of character to secure a hearing: hence much of the high esteem in which Latimer was held by the poor and oppressed, who regarded him as specially appointed by God for their protection. We may imagine, for example, how the victims of the corrupt judges of the time would thank God for such as the following:—

"My lords judges, ye should be more afraid of the poor widow than of a nobleman, with all the friends and power that he can make. Now-a-days the judges be afraid to hear a poor man against the rich; insomuch they will either pronounce against him, or so drive off the poor man's suit that he shall not be able to go through with it. The greatest man in a realm cannot so hurt a judge as a poor widow; such a shrewd turn she can do him. And with what armour, I pray you? She can bring the judge's skin over his ears, and never lay hands upon him. And how is that? 'The tears of the poor fall down upon their cheeks, and go up to heaven,' and cry for vengeance before God, the judge of widows, the father of widows and orphans. Poor people be oppressed even by laws. 'Wo worth to them that make evil laws against the poor!' If wo be to them that make laws against the poor, what shall be to them that hinder and mar good laws? What will ye do in the day of great vengeance, when God shall visit you? He saith, He will hear the tears of poor women when he goeth on visitation. For their sakes he will hurt the judge, be he never so high. He will for widows' sakes change realms, bring them into subjection, pluck the judges' skins over their heads.

"Cambyses was a great emperor, such another as our master is; he had many lords-deputies, lords-presidents, and lieutenants under him. It is a great while ago since I read the history. It chanced he had under him in one of his dominions a briber, a gift-taker, a gratifier of rich men,—he followed gifts as fast as he that followed the pudding;—a hand-maker in his office, to make his son a great man; as the old saying is, 'Happy is the child whose father goeth to the devil.' The cry of the poor widow came to the emperor's ear, and caused him to flay the judge quick, and laid his skin in his chair of

judgment, that all judges that should give judgment afterwards should sit in the same skin. Surely it was a goodly sign, a goodly monument, the sign of the judge's skin. I pray God we may once see the sign of the skin in England!

"Ye will say, peradventure, that this is cruelly and uncharitably spoken. No, no; I do it charitably for a love I bear my country. God saith, 'I will visit.' God hath two visitations: the first is when He revealeth His word by preachers, and where the first is accepted, the second cometh not; the second visitation is vengeance. He went a visitation when He brought the judge's skin over his ears. If His word be despised, He cometh with His second visitation—with vengeance. Noe preached God's word a hundred years, and was laughed to scorn, and called an old doting fool. Because they would not accept this first visitation, God visited them the second time; He poured down showers of rain till all the world was drowned. Lot was a visitor of Sodom and Gomorrah, but because they regarded not his preaching, God visited them the second time, and burnt them all up with brimstone, saving Lot. Moses came first a visitation into Egypt with God's word, and because they would not hear him, God visited them again, and drowned them in the Red Sea. God likewise with His first visitation visited the Israelites by His prophets; but because they would not hear His prophets, He visited them the second time, and dispersed them in Assyria and Babylon. John Baptist likewise, and our Saviour Christ, visited them afterwards, declaring to them God's will; and because they despised those visitors, He destroyed Jerusalem by Titus and Vespasian. Germany was visited twenty years with God's word" [*i.e.*, from 1517], "but they did not earnestly embrace it, and in life follow it, but made a mangle and a hotch-potch of it—I cannot tell what, partly Popery, partly true religion, mingled together. They say in my country, when they call their hogs to the swine-trough, 'Come to thy mingle-mangle, come pur, come pur;' even so they made mingle-mangle of it. They could clatter and prate of the Gospel; but when all cometh to all, they joined Popery so with it that they marred all together: they scratched and scraped all the livings of the Church, and under a colour of religion turned it to their own proper gain and lucre. God, seeing that they would not come unto His word, now He visiteth them in the second time of His visitation with His wrath;[1] for the

[1] Alluding to the arrangement called *Interim*, by which the German Protestants were for a time deprived of many of their religious privileges.

taking away of God's Word is a manifest token of His wrath. We have now a first visitation in England; let us beware of the second. We have the ministration of His Word; we are yet well: but the house is not clean swept yet. God hath sent us a noble King in this His visitation: let us not provoke Him against us. Let us beware; let us not displease Him; let us not be unthankful and unkind; let us beware of by-walking and contemning of God's Word; let us pray diligently for our King; let us receive with all obedience and prayer the Word of God."

This earnest exhortation to obedience had more in it than meets the eye of the ordinary reader, and leads us naturally to refer to what was the great topic of the day, an occurrence in which Latimer was conspicuously concerned, and his conduct in which has been most severely censured by some modern historians. The Lord-Admiral, of whom we have already spoken, had, notwithstanding repeated warnings, continued to prosecute his ambitious designs. His wife, the Queen-Dowager, had died in the summer of 1548, not without suspicion of having been poisoned by him; and he had then attempted to gain the hand of the Princess Elizabeth, with whom, during his wife's lifetime, he had conducted himself in a manner that reflects no credit upon the character of that renowned lady. He had corrupted the King's servants; had defrauded the treasury; had abused his authority as Admiral in the most lawless way; had made the most dangerous preparations for seizing the King's person; and according to rumour had, in desperation, attempted to murder the young King, who only escaped by the barking of his faithful pet dog.[1] He was arrested accordingly on January 19, and committed to the Tower; and after a trial of the usual kind for treason, he was condemned to the customary death of a traitor. On being informed of the sentence, Seymour requested that

[1] See the articles of impeachment in Burnet, v. p. 232, etc.; the rumour is referred to in *Zurich Letters*, p. 648.

"Mr. Latimer might come to him," having doubtless heard him highly praised by his late wife, who is said to have been converted to the Protestant faith by Latimer. Latimer accordingly visited him in the Tower, and perhaps attended him to the place of execution on Tower-hill, on March 20, two days before the sermon we have just quoted. The preacher's allusions to the duty of all Englishmen to obey their lawful prince, were thus at once understood to imply a severe condemnation of the conduct of the Lord-Admiral; Latimer, indeed, without mentioning Seymour's name, assumed that his audience "knew what he meant well enough." But there were many who doubted his guilt; Latimer's words were consequently much censured; and in his next sermon before the Court, on March 29, he deemed it necessary to defend himself by narrating all that he knew of Seymour's death. The passages on this subject have been omitted from most editions of Latimer's works, a tacit but unwarrantable censure on Latimer by his editors; and they have been fiercely attacked and stigmatised in the strongest language by several Romish historians, so that it is part of a biographer's duty to submit them to his readers. It had been said by some of Seymour's partisans, "the man died very boldly; he would not have done so, had he not been in a just quarrel." Latimer replied:—

"This is no good argument, my friends—a man seemeth not to fear death, therefore his cause is good. This is a deceivable argument—he went to his death boldly, *ergo*, he standeth in a just quarrel. The Anabaptists that were burnt here in divers towns in England (as I heard of credible men, I saw them not myself,) went to their death even *intrepide*, as ye will say, without any fear in the world, cheerfully. Well, let them go. There was in the old doctors' times another kind of poisoned heretics, that were called Donatists; and these heretics went to their execution as though they should have gone to some jolly recreation or banquet, to some belly-cheer, or to a play. And will ye argue then—He goeth to his death boldly or

cheerfully, *ergo*, he dieth in a just cause? Nay, that sequel followeth no more than this—A man seems to be afraid of death, *ergo*, he dieth evil. And yet our Saviour Christ was afraid of death Himself.

"If I should have said" [in my last sermon] "all that I knew, your ears would have irked to have heard it, and now God hath brought more to light. And as touching the kind of his death, whether he be saved or no, I refer that to God only. What God *can* do, I can tell. I will not deny but that He may in the twinkling of an eye save a man, and turn his heart. What He *did*, I cannot tell. And when a man hath two strokes with an axe, who can tell but that between the strokes he doth repent? It is very hard to judge. Well, I will not go so nigh to work; but this I will say, if they ask me what I think of his death, that he died very dangerously, irksomely, horribly. The man being in the Tower, wrote certain papers, which I saw myself. They were two little ones, one to my lady Mary's grace, and another to my lady Elizabeth's grace, tending to this end, that they should conspire against my lord Protector's grace; surely, so seditiously as could be. Now what a kind of death was this, that when he was ready to lay his head upon the block, he turns me to the Lieutenant's servant, and saith 'Bid my servant speed the thing that he wots of.' Well, the word was overheard. His servant confessed these two papers, and they were found in a shoe of his: they were sewed between the soles of a velvet shoe. He made his ink so craftily and with such workmanship, as the like hath not been seen. I was prisoner in the Tower myself, and I could never invent to make ink so. It is a wonder to hear of his subtility. He made his pen of the aglet of a point, that he plucked from his hose, and thus wrote these letters so seditiously, as ye have heard, enforcing many matters against my lord Protector's grace, and so forth. God had left him to himself, He had clean forsaken him. What would he have done if he had lived still, that went about this gear when he laid his head on the block, at the end of his life? Charity, they say, worketh but Godly, and not after this sort.

"Well, he is gone: he knoweth his fate by this; he is either in joy or in pain. There is but two states, if we be once gone. There is no change" [from one to the other]. "This is the speech of the Scripture, 'Whersoever the tree falleth, either into the south, or into the north, there it shall rest.' By the falling of the tree is signified the death of a man: if he fall into the south, he shall be saved; for the south is hot, and betokeneth charity or salvation: if he fall in the north, in the cold of infidelity, he shall be damned. There are but

two states—the state of salvation and the state of damnation. There is no repentance after this life, but if he die in the state of damnation, he shall rise in the same; yea, though he have a whole monkery to sing for him, he shall have his final sentence when he dieth."

Latimer recurs to the same subject oftener than once, recounting what he had heard and witnessed of the conduct of Seymour, whom he declared to be "the farthest from the fear of God that ever he knew or heard of in England." For this attack upon the character and memory of the Admiral, Latimer has been censured with extreme severity. Lingard, who is always bitter against Latimer, and omits no opportunity of assailing him, speaks with indignation of him as having on this occasion "lent his eloquence to defend the barbarous animosity of Somerset." His charge is merely an echo of the censure of Sir John Hayward,[1] and both have followed Sandars, who, with his characteristic shameless audacity, says that "if Latimer were the Apostle of England," as the Reformers said, "then his apostleship consisted in lying." The good taste of Latimer's allusions may indeed be questioned by those who do not consider the gravity of the crisis; but their abstract truth and justice cannot be disputed. It would be an easy matter to defend Latimer, but the burden of framing his defence need not be undertaken by his biographer. An historian of profound research and unquestionable judgment has thus defended Latimer:

"No one who has read the depositions" [against Seymour] "in Haynes, or who has examined the same evidence as it is abridged in the general historians of the times, will deny that the life of Lord Seymour, of Sudley, was that of a fierce, ambitious, proud, and revengeful man; and if the story told by Latimer be true, that his last hours were employed in a device to sow jealousies between the princesses Mary and Elizabeth and the Protector, that he wrote letters for that purpose, which letters Latimer saw, it proves that he laid his head upon the block in the same violent, unforgiving, and vindictive

[1] Kennett, ii. 303.

spirit in which he lived. Was it too much to call such a death dangerous, irksome, horrible? I think not."[1]

In the following extract we have a specimen of the manner in which Latimer, when occasion offered, exposed the errors which had so long been taught in England.

"What should it mean, that God would have us so diligent and earnest in prayer? Hath He such pleasure in our works? Many talk of prayer, and make it a lip-labouring. Prayer is not babbling; nor praying is not monkery. It is, to miserable folk that are oppressed, a comfort, solace, and a remedy. But what maketh our prayer to be acceptable to God? It lieth not in our power; we must have it by another mean. Remember what God saith of His Son, 'This is my dear Son, in whom I delight.' He hath pleasure in nothing but Him. How cometh it to pass that our prayer pleaseth God? Our prayer pleaseth God, because Christ pleaseth God. When we pray, we come unto Him in the confidence of Christ's merits, and thus offering up our prayers, they shall be heard for Christ's sake. Yea, Christ will offer them up for us, that offered up once His sacrifice to God, which was acceptable; and he that cometh with any other mean than this, God knoweth him not.

"This is not the missal sacrifice, the Popish sacrifice, to stand at the altar and offer up Christ again; Out upon it that ever it was used. I will not say nay, but that ye shall find in the old doctors this word *sacrifice*" [applied to the communion], "but there is one general solution for all the doctors, that St. Augustine showeth us, viz., 'The sign of a thing hath oftentimes the name of the thing that it signifieth.' As" [thus] "the supper of the Lord is the sacrament" [outward visible sign] "of another thing—it is a commemoration of His death which suffered once for us; and because it is a sign of Christ's offering up, therefore it bears the name thereof. And this sacrifice" [viz., prayer offered up in confidence of Christ's merits] "a woman can offer as well as a man; yea, a poor woman in the belfry hath as good authority to offer up this sacrifice, as hath the bishop in his *pontificalibus*, with his mitre on his head, his rings on his fingers, and his sandals on his feet. And whosoever cometh asking the

[1] Tytler, *England under Edward VI. and Mary*, vol. i. p. 152. I have too much respect for Milton to repeat (it would be superfluous to refute) his idle and baseless comment upon Latimer's proceeding in his book of the *Reformation in England*.

Father remedy in his necessity for Christ's sake, he offereth up as acceptable a sacrifice as any bishop can do.

"And so, to make an end: this must be done with a constant faith and a sure confidence in Christ. Faith, faith, faith; we are undone for lack of faith. Christ nameth faith; faith is all together: 'When the Son of man shall come, shall he find faith on the earth?' Why speaketh He so much of faith? Because it is hard to find a true faith. He speaketh not of a political faith, a faith set up for a time; but a constant, a permanent, a durable faith, as durable as God's Word. He came many times; first in the time of Noah, when he preached, but He found little faith. He came also when Lot preached, when He destroyed Sodom and Gomorroh, but He found no faith. And to be short, He shall come at the latter day, but He shall find a little faith. And I ween the day be not far off.[1] When He was here carnally, did He find any faith? Many speak of faith, but few there be that hath it. Christ mourneth the lack of it; He complaineth that when He came He found no faith.

"This Faith is a great state, a lady, a duchess, a great woman; and she hath even a great company and train about her, as a noble state ought to have. First, she hath a gentleman-usher that goeth before her, and where he is not, there is not lady Faith. This gentleman-usher is called 'Knowledge of Sin;'[2] when we enter into our heart, and acknowledge our faults, and stand not about to defend them. Now, as the gentleman-usher goeth before her, so she hath a train that cometh behind her: and yet, though they come behind, they be all of Faith's company, they are all with her. All these wait upon Faith: she hath a great train after her, besides her gentleman-usher, her whole household; and these be, the works of our vocation, when every man considereth what vocation he is in, what calling he is in, and doeth the works of the same; as, to be good to his neighbour, to obey God, etc. This is the train that followeth lady Faith, as for example:—a faithful judge hath first an heavy reckoning of his fault, repenting himself of his wickedness, and then forsaketh his iniquity, his impiety, feareth no man, walks upright; and he that doth not thus, hath not lady Faith, but rather a boldness of sin and abusing of Christ's passion. Lady Faith is never without her gentleman-usher, nor without her train: she is no anchoress, she dwells not

[1] Latimer was deeply impressed with the idea that the end of the world was at hand, and often refers to it.

[2] Knowledge means here acknowledgment: the words were the same in Latimer's time.

alone, she is never a private woman, she is never alone. And yet many there be that boast themselves that they have faith, and that when Christ shall come they shall do well enough. Nay, nay, those that be faithful shall be so few, that Christ shall scarce see them."

The passage just quoted is worthy of being carefully considered. It began with a condemnation of the errors of the Romanists; but the preacher was impartial in rebuking whatever, on either side, seemed contrary to God's Word. Success had developed dangers amongst the Protestants in England, as it has done in the Church in every age. The cause of the Reformation was now clearly the winning side, and many espoused it from unworthy motives, some even whose lives were an open outrage to the principles which they professed to follow. The long controversy about justification by faith and not by priestly magic, had been abused by some to countenance themselves in utter disregard of all religious duties. An orthodox creed had come, in some cases, not only to be magnified far above a holy life, but to be considered an acceptable substitute for it. As Becon complained, there were already many "gross gospellers, whose religion consisted entirely in words and disputations, not at all in Christian acts and godly deeds." Solomon's words, "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child," were beginning to be conspicuously realised in the reign of Edward. The King himself, making all reasonable allowance for flattery, was a youth of most exemplary piety, in every way worthy of the reverence in which the Reformers held him; but he could not, of course, control the impetuous spirits around him. There was no longer a firm hand against which the boldest feared to rise: the sovereign was a mere symbol of authority, which rival statesmen strove to grasp and wield for their own personal aggrandisement. What had been done in promoting the interests of the Reformation was indeed in accordance with the wishes of

the pious King, and was strenuously supported by Cranmer; but the great authorities in the State, the leading nobles, and wealthy gentry had in many cases merely given their adhesion to what seemed to them the popular wish. They were willing to profess themselves Reformers, so long as this seemed a necessary step to gain the favour of the King or secure popularity with the multitude. They had thrown off all the restraints of the old faith, and they refused to submit to any authority of that Gospel which was now everywhere proclaimed. Heresies of every kind were openly enunciated; gross licentiousness was shamelessly practised; the most solemn duties were scandalously neglected. All testimony concurs in speaking of the reign of Edward as marked by a great corruption in public morals, especially among the higher classes. The hearts of the pious Reformers were deeply distressed with the fierce tide of wickedness which they strove in vain to stem. The Bishops appealed to Parliament to devise some measures for the restoration of "godly discipline."[1] The great preachers of the day, Latimer, Gilpin, Lever, Bradford, Knox, all used their utmost eloquence in denouncing the prevalent vices. It was the never-failing theme of those frequent letters which passed between the English Reformers and their friends on the Continent. "Those very persons," writes Burcher to Bullinger, "who wish to be, so to speak, most evangelical, imitate carnal licentiousness, under the pretext of religion and liberty. Every kind of vice, alas! is rife among them, and especially that of adultery and fornication, which they do not consider as a sin."[2] "How dangerously our England is afflicted by heresies," Hooper laments to Bullinger, "God only knows; I am unable indeed, from sorrow of heart, to express unto

[1] *Lords' Journals*, Nov. 14, 1550. [2] *Zurich Letters*, p. 647.

your piety. Alas! not only are those heresies reviving among us which were formerly dead and buried, but new ones are springing up every day."[1] Both of Bullinger's correspondents were perhaps inclined to take too gloomy a view of things; but the general prevalence of vice and heresy, and, what was more to be lamented, the open sin of some who prided themselves on the orthodoxy of their reformed creed, are facts that cannot be gainsaid, and that must be borne in mind in reading Latimer's sermons. For more than twenty years the now aged Reformer had boldly denounced the errors and superstitions and immoralities of the Church of Rome; and he was equally unsparing in his exposure of the new vices and heresies that began to spring up in spite of the clear light of the Gospel. No abuse was more scandalous, for example, than the unblushing sale of spiritual offices, none more likely to produce permanent and irreparable evil in the Church; and Latimer thus turns upon the infamous practice (unhappily not yet abolished) the full force of his censure and his ridicule.

"I marvel the ground gapes not and devours us; howbeit, we ought not to marvel—surely it is the great lenity of God that suffers it. O Lord, in what case are we! If the great men in Turkey should use in their religion of Mahomet to sell, as our patrons commonly sell benefices here, the office of preaching, the office of salvation, it should be taken as an intolerable thing: the Turk would not suffer it in his commonwealth. Patrons be charged to see the office done, and not to seek a lucre and a gain by their patronage.[2] There was a patron in England, when it was that he had a benefice fallen into his hand, and a good brother of mine came unto him, and brought him thirty apples in a dish, and gave them his man to carry them to his master. It is like he gave one to his man for his labour, to make up the game, and so there was thirty-one. This man cometh to his master, and presented him with the dish of apples, saying, 'Sir, such

[1] *Zurich Letters*, p. 66.

[2] The usual practice was to give the living to one who had already bound himself to make over a large part to the patron.

a man hath sent you a dish of fruit, and desireth you to be good unto him for such a benefice.' 'Tush, tush,' quoth he, 'this is no apple matter; I will have none of his apples; I have as good as these, or as he hath any, in mine own orchard.' The man came to the priest again, and told him what his master said. 'Then,' quoth the priest, 'desire him yet to prove one of them for my sake; he shall find them much better than they look for.' He cut one of them, and found ten pieces of gold in it. 'Marry,' quoth he, 'this is a good apple.' The priest standing not far off, hearing what the gentleman said, cried out and answered, 'They are all one apple, I warrant you, sir; they grew all on one tree, and have all one taste.' 'Well, he is a good fellow, let him have it,' quoth the patron. Get you a graft of this tree, and I warrant you it will stand you in better stead than all St. Paul's learning. Well, let patrons take heed; for they shall answer for all the souls that perish through their default. There is a saying that there be a great many in England that say there is no soul,[1] that believe not in the immortality of man's soul, that think it is not eternal, but like a dog's soul; that think there is neither heaven nor hell. O Lord, what a weighty matter is this! What a lamentable thing in a Christian commonwealth! I cannot tell what they say; but I perceive by their works that they think so, or else they would never do as they do. These sellers of offices show that they believe that there is neither hell nor heaven: it is taken for a laughing matter."

To such a length did this scandalous practice of selling livings proceed, that many benefices were held by laymen. Hundreds of churches were reduced to worse than Popish degradation; hundreds of pulpits, untenanted by any clergyman, were covered with dust. In 1553, a Bill was introduced enacting that no person should hold ecclesiastical preferment, unless he were at least in deacon's orders; and the House of Commons were actually sunk so low as to throw it out. Bernard Gilpin, the Apostle of the North, venturing to use stronger language even than Latimer had ever employed, declared before the Court, that "if such a monster as Darvel Gatheren" [the hideous Welsh idol

[1] This opinion is referred to by Hooper in the letter already quoted; *Zurich Letters*, p. 65.

of which we have read before, which figured at the burning of Forest] "could have set his hand to a bill to let the patron take the greater part of the profits, he might have had a benefice." Such facts as these will have to be considered again by us, when we come to the Popish reaction under Mary.[1]

These few specimens culled from Latimer's sermons of Lent, 1549, will enable modern readers to estimate aright the position of Latimer in the reign of Edward, as no narrow-minded theologian, no fierce advocate of revolutionary measures, no courtly chaplain fawning to the great, but (as the collector of his sermons truly described him) one who frankly "uttered the truth, to the extolling of virtue, to the reward of well-doers, the suppressing of vice, the abolishment of all Papistry." That Latimer came to be generally recognised as a censor of public morals is the best tribute that could be paid to his ability and his personal integrity: only a man of great force of mind could have attained that position; only a man of unimpeachable honesty could have retained it. Of his great popularity we have already had several proofs: one curious illustration has been gathered from the churchwardens' books of St. Margaret's parish, Westminster, where, under the year 1549, the following entry occurs:—

> "Paid to William Curlewe, for mending of divers pews that were broken when Dr. Latimer did preach 0 1 6"[2]

The last of his sermons before the Court, had been preached on Good Friday, April 19. A week before, on the 12th, a commission had been issued by the King, appointing Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer and some twenty others to inquire into the heresies that were so rife in the

[1] See also Hutchinson's *Epistle to Cranmer*, prefixed to the Parker Society's edition of his works.

[2] Townsend's Foxe, vol. vii., quoted from Nichols' *Illustrations of Ancient Times, etc.*

country, with full powers to examine heretics, and inflict upon them appropriate punishments.[1] The first case brought before the Commissioners was one that has been frequently discussed since. One Joanna Bocher, otherwise called Joan of Kent, bewildering herself with the Anabaptist speculations, denied the true Incarnation of our Lord. Her judges reasoned with her, but she remained obstinate, and even taunted them with their ignorance of Scripture. "It is a goodly matter," she said, "to consider your ignorance. It was not long ago since you burned Anne Askew for a piece of bread,[2] and yet came yourselves soon after to believe and profess the same doctrine for which you burned her. And now, forsooth, you will needs burn me for a piece of flesh, and in the end you will come to believe this also, when you have read the Scriptures and understand them." Her obstinacy left them no alternative; she was condemned and handed over to the civil power;[3] a year's respite, however, was granted her, in the hope that calm reflection, and conference with men of learning, might induce her to recant. Nothing, however, could change her belief; and on May 2, 1550, she perished at the stake. Her execution is a black spot on the history of the English Reformation, and has been greedily seized upon by the Roman Catholics as a proof of the intolerance of Protestantism. It was intolerant beyond all question; but such an accusation comes with a bad grace from the sons of a church that has never scrupled to use the rack and the stake as instruments of propagating the faith. Every circumstance, moreover, in the process against Joan

[1] Rymer *Fœdera*, xv. 181.

[2] The speech is given on the authority of Strype (*Eccl. Mem.* ii. p. 1. 335), and may be set down as gossip. Not one of Joan Bocher's judges had been concerned in the condemnation of the gentle Anne Askew.

[3] See the sentence, etc., in Burnet, i. 246.

of Kent showed how reluctant her judges were to adopt harsh measures against her; how eagerly they desired any concession on her part that would have exempted her from the full penalties of the law. The romantic story usually appended to the history of Joan's martyrdom, which represents the young King as unwilling to sign the writ for her execution, and only yielding with tears to Cranmer's urgent entreaties, may be now finally transferred from the pages of the historian to those of the sensational novelist. The warrant was issued by the order of the Council, not by the King; and Cranmer was not even present on the occasion, as the Council-book, still preserved, puts beyond all question.[1]

Other heretics were brought before the same commission, and Latimer was present when an Anabaptist of Stratford-le-Bow, who had denied the doctrine of the Trinity, and the Incarnation of Christ, abjured his errors, and was sentenced to bear a fagot on the following Sunday, at Paul's Cross, standing with it on his shoulder, while the preacher refuted his heresies.

The Book of Common Prayer came into use for the first time on Whit-Sunday, June 9. Next morning a number of the common people in Devonshire rose in rebellion, declaring they would have no *new* service, and compelling some of the priests (not very much against their will, it is believed) to celebrate Divine worship after the old method. They demanded the restoration of the old Latin service, the re-enactment of the Six Articles, the restriction of the circulation of the English Bible, in short, the revival of that darkness and superstition which had been to such a large extent dispelled by the labours and sufferings of nearly

[1] See, among others, preface to Hutchinson's *Works*, Parker Society edition, where the romantic fiction is disproved at length.

thirty years. Cranmer was employed to write an elaborate refutation of their demands; but a considerable army, and some sharp fighting, were found more effectual arguments for reducing them to order. Simultaneously with these disturbances in the West, there were risings in Wiltshire, in Sussex, in Hampshire, in Yorkshire, and nearly half of the counties of England, occurring so suddenly, and spreading so rapidly, as to show that there was a widely-diffused feeling of discontent throughout the country. It was only the Western rebels that gave their religious grievances the most prominent place among the wrongs for which they demanded redress; the others complained mainly of the tyranny of the nobles and wealthy, and especially of the enclosure of land that had always been common property, of the raising of rents and prices, and of the diminished demand for labour, in consequence of the soil being abandoned to pasture and not brought under tillage. It was, in short, a species of servile war, on which it would be superfluous to enlarge in this biography; it could not, however, be entirely overlooked as an important transaction fraught with grave consequences, and indicative of an unsettled condition of the country, a sign of the times, well worthy of consideration.

Of the other affairs of the autumn of 1549, a few words will suffice. Bonner was deprived of his bishopric, and imprisoned; by a stretch of authority, certainly; yet he met with very little sympathy, his rough, fierce temper, and his vacillation of opinion rendering men insensible to the injustice of the proceedings against him. Of more importance was the fall of the Protector, Somerset. Many of the Council, for various reasons, some from hatred of his religious opinions, some from jealousy, some from ambition, had become his enemies, and only waited a

suitable opportunity to turn upon him. Taking advantage accordingly of his absence with the young King at Hampton-court, they spread reports that he was levying men to make himself absolute master of the kingdom; they gained over the City, seized possession of the Tower, secured many of the nobles and gentry; and the Protector, after a vain attempt to appeal to arms, yielded to their unquestionable superiority. Articles charging him with high misdemeanours and treason were brought against him, and he was sent to the Tower to await his trial. His fall excited the hopes of the Romish party in England; he had always been a zealous Reformer: Warwick, who was the rising man likely to step into his place, was a secret Romanist; and it was fondly believed that, after the imprisonment of Somerset, the old Latin service and the abolished ceremonies would be restored.[1] Warwick (better known as the Duke of Northumberland, to which title he was speedily advanced) would doubtless have preferred to gratify these wishes; but he was not inclined to postpone his fortune to his creed; he saw that Edward and the influential part of the nation were in favour of the Reformed doctrines, and he threw in his lot with them, with all the reckless zeal of a man to whom religion was simply a means of promoting his own ambitious views. Though always "a Papist in his heart," as he declared on the scaffold, he assumed such a semblance of earnestness in the cause of the Reformation as to deceive many, especially of those more ardent Reformers whose opinions he seemed so cordially to adopt. Hooper, for example, a man of simple piety and intense zeal, but singularly destitute of any of Latimer's shrewdness in reading character, conceived the most profound reverence for Northumberland, and writes

[1] Burnet, v. 287, from Cranmer's *Register*.

of him as "that most faithful and intrepid soldier of Christ."[1] The elevation of Northumberland to power was followed by more summary measures against the Romanists than any that had been previously adopted: measures which were hailed by such men as Hooper as brilliant indications of religious progress; but which were of no real service to the Reformation, and, indeed, constituted another of the elements of that Popish reaction which in the next reign well-nigh swept the Reformation away.

Another transaction of the summer of 1549 might have been allowed to pass unnoticed but for its eliciting a kindly notice of Latimer by Ridley, which it would be unpardonable to omit in this biography. Amid the universal wreck of all institutions capable of yielding plunder to the hungry courtiers, the Universities were threatened; and it was proposed to divert some of their revenues from sacred to secular uses. At Cambridge, Clare Hall, where Latimer had spent part of his time as a student, had suffered from the rude hands of the spoiler. There was nothing left in it but bare walls; the library had been completely pillaged; greater misfortune still, the authorities contemplated its conversion into a college for the exclusive study of law. Ridley protested against this secularising of what had been solemnly dedicated to God's service, and, in writing to Somerset, pleads with kindly sentiment that those halls might be spared which had reared one so useful in his generation as Latimer.

"I consider," he writes, "not only what learned men may be brought up there in time to come, but also how many hath been already, some such as I think it is hard for the whole University to match them with the like. I will speak now but of one, I mean *Master Latimer, which is, as I do think, a man appointed of God and*

[1] *Zurich Letters.*

endued with excellent gifts of grace to set forth God's Word, to whom in my judgment not only the King's majesty and his honourable Council, but also the whole realm is much bound, not only for his constant maintenance and defence of God's truth, when Papists and persecutions did assault the godly, but also for that now he preacheth the Gospel so purely, and so earnestly and freely rebuketh the worldly of his wickedness. Alexander, if I do rightly remember the history, in the victorious course of the conquest, did spare a city for the memory of the famous poet Homer's sake. Latimer far passeth that poet, and the King's highness by your grace's advice shall also excell that Gentile Prince in all kind of mercy and clemency."[1]

No more graceful tribute was ever paid by one great man to another. Somerset, however, was not influenced by any such sentimental considerations; he disapproved of Ridley's suggestions; and it was only his own overthrow that averted the threatened fate of Clare Hall.

In the Parliament which sat from November 14, 1549, to January 31, 1550, some further progress was made towards the completion of the Reformation. A Bill was passed ordering all the images that still remained in churches to be broken and defaced, those only which formed parts of tombs and sepulchral monuments being spared; and even these were to be mutilated if they had ever been abused for purposes of superstition. It was likewise ordered by Act of Parliament and by Royal Proclamation that all the old service-books, the "antiphoners, missals, grayles, processionals, manuels, legends, pies, portasies, journals, and ordinals,"[2] should be called in, and so "defaced and abolished, that they might never after serve," either for their original use, or as "a let to that godly and uniform order," which had been set forth in the Common Prayer. This measure was intended especially to condemn "divers unquiet and evil-disposed persons," who, after

[1] State Paper Office, Edward VI., *Domestic*, vol. vii., No. 11. The letter has never been printed.

[2] *Letter from the Lords of Council.* Burnet, v. 287.

Somerset's fall, had "noised abroad that they should have again their old Latin service, their conjured bread and water," and the rest of their former "vain and superfluous ceremonies." A new form was likewise prepared for the ordination of priests and deacons, and the consecration of bishops, in which all, or nearly all, the objectionable ceremonies of the Romish ordinal were retrenched. It is very noteworthy that these small measures of reform, trivial and unimportant when compared with the great enactments of former years, were opposed by many of the bishops, and were carried mainly by the voices of the temporal peers. When the Bill for sanctioning the Reformed Ordinal was read the third time, only *six* bishops voted for it, *five* voted against it, *sixteen* were absent, most of them of course hostile, but not bold enough to exhibit their hostility openly; the Bill for defacing images, in like manner, could only muster *eight* advocates on the episcopal bench, *six* opposed it, *thirteen* were absent.[1] The majority of the bishops, in fact, were Roman Catholics at heart, and looked with disfavour on any step that was taken to promote the Reformation; and naturally enough they lost the respect of the people. They complained in Parliament that their authority was gone, and that public morals had suffered in consequence. The peers expressed their profound regret; but no steps were taken to redress the alleged grievance. Indeed, the Lords themselves, shortly afterwards, gave a conspicuous proof of the disesteem into which the Bishops had fallen, for they appointed a commission to revise the ecclesiastical laws, although the whole episcopal bench (one only excepted), headed by Cranmer, combined to oppose it.[2]

[1] *Journals of the House of Lords.*
[2] *Lords' Journals.*

In the beginning of 1550, Latimer, whose bodily infirmities were aggravated by increasing years, was so seriously ill that he despaired of recovery. He was not, however, to die on his bed; his health was again restored, and he was able once more to resume, for the last time, his duties as Court preacher during Lent. Hooper had been ordered to preach on the Wednesdays in Lent, and delivered seven sermons on the Book of Jonah, which greatly pleased the young King, who entertained a high respect for the preacher's learning and earnestness. The Fridays in Lent were allotted to Poynet, subsequently Bishop, successively of Rochester and Winchester; a man sufficiently gifted, so far as zeal and learning were concerned, but whose life, in one important matter, fell very far short of the standard of Christian morality. Latimer seems to have preached only on Monday, March 10,[1] his health possibly not admitting of any further effort at that time. His sermon (or sermons, for he preached both morning and afternoon) he felt to be his "*ultimum vale*" before that audience; and he was therefore more zealous than ever in rebuking what he deemed the prevalent vices of the period. He implored the King to devise some means for restraining the scandalous immorality of the day, and for punishing the shameful bribery and peculation in the public offices. All the evils that afflicted the country seemed to him to flow from one source, that "love of money," which the Apostle declared to be "the root of all evil;" and it was against covetousness, therefore, that

[1] The exact date of the sermon is fixed by a comparison of Latimer's statement: "I have this present day delivered into the Council, £180, etc.," with the entry in the *Council Book*, "Monday, March 10, 1550, Mr. Doctor Latymer brought in £180, etc.;" see *supra*, p. 402, note. No previous biographer or editor of Latimer has ever consulted the *Council Book;* in fact, no one has made any serious attempt to assign Latimer's sermons to any precise dates.

Latimer's voice was for the last time raised in solemn protest before the rulers of England. Of the sermon, which commenced with an allusion, well understood at the time, to Hooper's lectures on Jonah, the following specimen will suffice :—

"'Take heed and beware of covetousness' [such was his text], 'Take heed and beware of covetousness;' 'Take heed and beware of covetousness.' And what and if I should say nothing else these three or four hours (for I know it will be so long, in case I be not commanded to the contrary), but these words, 'Take heed and beware of covetousness?' It would be thought a strange sermon before a King, to say nothing else but 'Beware of covetousness.' And yet as strange as it is, it would be like the sermon of Jonah, that he preached to the Ninevites, as touching the shortness, and as touching the paucity or fewness of the words. For his sermon was, 'There is yet forty days to come, and Nineveh shall be destroyed.' Thus he walked from street to street, and from place to place round about the city, and said nothing else but 'There is yet forty days,' quoth he, 'and Nineveh shall be destroyed.' There is no great odds nor difference, at the least-wise in the number of words, no nor yet in the sense or meaning, between these two sermons, 'There is yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed,' and these words that I have taken to speak of this day, 'Take heed and beware of covetousness.' For Nineveh should be destroyed for sin, and of their sins covetousness was one, and one of the greatest; so that it is all one in effect. And as they be like concerning the shortness, the paucity of words, the brevity of words, and also the meaning and purpose; so I would they might be like in fruit and profit. For what came of Jonah's sermon? What was the fruit of it? 'At the preaching of Jonah they believed God.' Here was a great fruit, a great effect wrought. What is the same? 'They believed God:' they believed God's preacher, God's officer, God's minister Jonah, and were converted from their sin. They believed that, as the preacher said, if they did not repent and amend their life, the city should be destroyed within forty days. This was a great fruit, for Jonah was but one man, and he preached but one sermon, and it was but a short sermon neither, as touching the number of words; and yet he turned all the whole city, great and small, rich and poor, king and all.

"We be many preachers here in England, and we preach many

long sermons, yet the people will not repent nor convert. This was the fruit, the effect, and the good that his sermon did, that all the whole city at his preaching converted, and amended their evil living, and did penance in sackcloth. And yet here, in this sermon of Jonah, is no great curiousness, no great clerkliness, no great affectation of words, nor of painted eloquence; it was none other but 'Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed,' it was no more. This was no great curious sermon, but this was a nipping sermon, a pinching sermon, a biting sermon; it had a full bite, it was a nipping sermon, a rough sermon, and a sharp biting sermon. Do you not here marvel that these Ninevites cast not Jonah in prison; that they did not revile him and rebuke him? They did not revile him nor rebuke him; but God gave them grace to hear him, and to convert and amend at this preaching. A strange matter, so noble a city to give place to one man's sermon! Now England cannot abide this gear; they cannot be content to hear God's minister, and his threatening for their sin, though the sermon be never so good, though it be never so true. It is 'a naughty fellow, a seditious fellow; he maketh trouble and rebellion in the realm; he lacketh discretion.' But the Ninevites rebuked not Jonah that he lacked discretion, or that he spake out of time, that his sermon was out of season made; but in England, if God's preacher, God's minister be anything quick, or do speak sharply, then he is a foolish fellow, he is rash, he lacketh discretion. Now-a-days, if they cannot reprove the doctrine that is preached, then they will reprove the preacher that he lacketh due consideration of the times; and that he is of learning sufficient but he wanteth discretion. 'What a time is this' (they say) 'picked out to preach such things! He should have a respect and a regard to the time, and to the state of things, and of the commonweal.' It rejoiceth me sometimes when my friend cometh and telleth me that they find fault with my discretion; for by likelihood, think I, the doctrine is true; for if they could find fault with the doctrine, they would not charge me with the lack of discretion, but they would charge me with my doctrine, and not with the lack of discretion or with the inconveniency of the time. I will now ask you a question. I pray you, when should Jonah have preached against the covetousness of Nineveh, if the covetous men should have appointed him his time? I know that preachers ought to have a discretion in their preaching, and that they ought to have a consideration and respect to the place and the time that he preacheth in; as I myself will say here that I would not say in the

country for no good. But what then! Sin must be rebuked; sin must be plainly spoken against. And when should Jonah have preached against Nineveh, if he should have forborne for the respects of the times, or the place, or the state of things there? For what was Nineveh? A noble, a rich, and a wealthy city. What is London to Nineveh? Like a village, as Islington, or such another, in comparison of London. Such a city was Nineveh, it was three day's journey to go through every street of it, and to go but from street to street. There were noblemen, rich men, wealthy men; there were vicious men and covetous men, and men that gave themselves to all voluptuous living, and to the worldliness of getting riches. Was this a time well chosen and discreetly taken of Jonah, to come and reprove them of their sin, to declare unto them the threatenings of God, and to tell them of their covetousness; and to say plainly unto them, that except they repented and amended their evil living, they and their city should be destroyed of God's hand within forty days? And yet they heard Jonah, and gave place to his preaching. They heard the threatenings of God, and feared His stroke and vengeance, and believed God: that is, they believed God's preacher and minister; they believed that God would be true of His word, that He spake by the mouth of His prophet, and thereupon did penance to turn away the wrath of God from them. Well, what shall we say? I will say this, and not spare: Christ saith Nineveh shall rise against the Jews at the last day, and bear witness against them; because that they, hearing God's threatening for sin, did penance at the preaching of Jonah in ashes and sackcloth; and I say, Nineveh shall arise against England, thou England! Nineveh shall rise against England, because it will not believe God, nor hear His preachers that cry daily unto them, nor amend their lives, and especially their covetousness. Covetousness is as great a sin now as it was then; and it is the same sin now it was then; and He will as sure strike for sin now, as He did then."

This year it was reported that Latimer had again been offered a bishopric,[1] possibly that of London, vacant by Bonner's deprivation, or that of Rochester, vacant by the transference of Ridley to London. The report may have been altogether without foundation: there certainly was

[1] See *Zurich Letters*, p. 465.

no probability that Latimer, now that his health was manifestly beginning to give way, would accept an office that was sure to bring with it an amount of labour and responsibility for which he had neither strength nor inclination.

It seems not improbable that part of this summer was spent in intimate intercourse with Bradford, for whom Latimer had conceived a warm affection, and to whom we owe the following homely Dutch sketch of Latimer's simple life and warm-hearted hospitality :—

"I thank you for your cheese," he writes to his friend Traves; "and so doth father Latimer, for I did give it him, and he saith he did never eat better cheese: and so I dare say he did not. I thank him I am as familiar with him as with you: yea, God so moveth him towards me, that his desire is to have me come and dwell with him whensoever I will, and welcome."[1]

The summer was in many ways notable in London. Ridley had succeeded to the diocese of which Bonner had been deprived, and he signalised his accesion to the see by various marked changes. The first ordinations according to the new "ordinal," took place on Midsummer Day, when, among others, Foxe the martyrologist was admitted into holy orders. During the summer, also, Ridley issued his injunctions for cleansing his diocese from various Popish customs, which still continued to be practised, and which kept up a species of counterfeit of the mass in spite of the legislation which had abolished that great Romish rite. And in order to mark unmistakably the change from the mass to the communion, he ordered that the "Lord's board should be set up after the form of an honest table decently covered, rather than after that of an altar; and that all other by-tables or altars should be removed." This reformation was not effected without con-

[1] Bradford's *Letters:* Foxe, vii. 285, etc.

siderable disturbance; for a jealousy now began to be exhibited towards all outward changes, and the Reformers were becoming divided amongst themselves. Of this disunion a most conspicuous proof was given at the close of the year, in the unhappy dissension that sprang up in the Church on Hooper's nomination to the bishopric of Gloucester. At Easter, on the conclusion of his Lent sermons, Hooper was offered this bishopric by the King, but declined it. He objected to the oath of supremacy, which all bishops were required to take, as shameful and impious; and he condemned the episcopal dress and the ceremonies used in consecration, as being Aaronic and Popish; and, therefore, very properly declined the proffered honour. Edward, however, was extremely anxious to secure the services of a prelate so zealous and learned as Hooper. Accordingly, he struck out the obnoxious clause in the oath, and promised to use his influence with Cranmer to procure the remission of those vestments and ceremonies to which objection had been made: and Hooper, on this understanding, consented to accept the offered bishopric, and was duly elected, and took the customary oaths, with the omission of the words which he deemed sinful. Cranmer had no scruple of conscience about the ceremonies; he regarded them as things in their own nature absolutely indifferent, and would willingly enough have gratified Hooper; but there were legal difficulties in the way. The form of ordination had been sanctioned only a few months before by Parliament, and, without the authority of Parliament, it could not legally be dispensed with. Hooper, moreover, had spoken in unkind and unwarrantable terms of the procedure of the Reforming bishops in Parliament. He was altogether ignorant of the extreme

difficulty with which any measure of reform could be carried in Parliament, where not one-fourth of the bishops were in favour of any further changes. He had spent the greater part of the last eight years in Switzerland, in a country where the Reformation had provoked a civil war, where the spirit of bitter hostility admitted of no compromise, where every thing had been done on a principle diametrically the opposite of that which had directed the English Reformation. He was, therefore, from his convictions, from habit, and from his natural disposition, inclined to stand out resolutely against the slightest compliance with what appeared to him foolish, if not also sinful ceremonies. His unbending determination provoked Ridley into an equally firm resolution to maintain the duty of all to obey the law in matters that were indifferent. Angry conferences ensued, to the grief of all pious Reformers, and the open joy of the Romish party. The great Continental Reformers, Peter Martyr and Bucer, were consulted, and both of them censured Hooper. The Council requested him to withdraw his opposition to the ceremonies. But Hooper had gone too far, he thought, to yield; instead of retracting, he preached against the ceremonies, arraigning the wisdom of the Council and the lawfulness of the form of ordination. Other points of difference naturally emerged in the heat of controversy; and the Council, offended with Hooper's conduct, ordered him not to leave his house except for the purpose of consulting with Cranmer, Ridley, or Goodrich, and forbade him to preach till he had further licence. Hooper, in spite of this prohibition, published a "Confession and Protestation," in which he repeated all the statements that had given offence. This, of course, only provoked the Council to further violence; they committed

him to Cranmer's custody, and afterwards sent him to the Fleet; finally, in March, 1551, he submitted, and was consecrated with all those ceremonies against which he had so strenuously protested. He preached before the King again in Lent, 1551, arrayed in the obnoxious garments which he had condemned as Aaronical. "His upper garment," says Foxe, who was a great admirer of Hooper, "was a long scarlet chimere[1] down to the foot, and under that a white linen rochet that covered all his shoulders; upon his head he had a geometrical, that is, a four-squared cap—a mathematical cap with four angles, dividing the whole world into four parts" [the ordinary college cap in fact], "albeit that his head was round."[2]

This unhappy controversy filled the Church with bitterness and confusion for nearly nine months; and, like the subsequent controversies on the same subject in the Church of England, it was a deplorable misfortune injurious to all parties except the Church of Rome. Hooper lost all the credit to which his bold defence of his opinions might have entitled him, by his finally yielding. He stultified himself by his own conduct; for if it was right in him to resist, then he sinned in complying; and if his compliance was free from sin, then his previous opposition must be deserving of censure. His diocese, which had never enjoyed the superintendence of a faithful bishop since Latimer had presided over it, was deprived for nearly a year of the benefit of his presence and his teaching. Nor did men fail to note that he, who had so vehemently condemned the ceremonies of the book of ordination as impious and

[1] The chimere is now black instead of scarlet, though the more gorgeous colour is still used on certain occasions.

[2] See on the controversy, Hooper's letters to Bullinger, and those of Peter Martyr and Micronius, in the *Zurich Letters:* Burnet, vols. ii, iii. *Council Book* of Edward VI., etc.

sinful, readily enough lent himself to schemes for alienating from the sees over which he was placed, those revenues which had been intended to support the ministers of religion, and not to swell the treasures of the griping nobles who plundered the Church. Hooper's diligence, and piety, and consistent example, and noble faithfulness to the death, have made the most ample amends for this unhappy controversy, and have secured him one of the most honoured places among the founders of the Reformed Church of England; but it will not be disputed that it would have been a public gain if, like Knox, he had firmly declined an office about which he had any scruples of conscience. It is gratifying to know that the temporary estrangement between the chief actors in this wretched controversy, Cranmer, Ridley, and Hooper, was soon healed. They had too many points in common to remain long hostile to each other. A year after the controversy, Cranmer writing to Melanchthon assures him that Hooper was in the greatest esteem among them, and was living with him at Lambeth on terms of the most familiar intimacy.[1] Such a primate as Cranmer was just the man to pour oil on the troubled waters of strife; but no subsequent reconciliation could undo the mischief which the controversy had produced. To spend nine months in debating whether a Christian man might without sin wear a four-squared geometrical cap, "albeit that his head was round," was not only attaching an exaggerated importance to a matter of little consequence; but in the actual condition of England, with vice and immorality of every kind openly rampant, with a large and ever increasing phalanx of determined Romanists on the watch, with the scantiest and most inadequate supply of faithful clergy,

[1] Cranmer's *Letters*, p. 431.

the raising of such a controversy was the most serious misfortune that had yet befallen the English Reformation. It was especially unfortunate in exciting the national pride of the English people against the Reformers: many who could not understand the principles in dispute, thought it an attempt to mould English institutions after the fashion of a petty Continental state, a blow aimed at English independence in fact, and from that moment a deep-rooted prejudice pervaded a large body of the population—not only against the extreme reforming party, but against those who had hitherto been the chief instruments in promoting the Reformation in England.

Latimer had no active share in the controversy, and never explicitly alludes to it. We know how utterly alien all such disputes were to his temper, and we can conceive the profound grief that must have oppressed him at witnessing this unhappy strife between men who should have been united as brethren in the same holy cause. Perhaps to this we may attribute some of his indignation against those whom he calls "hot gospellers," men, that is, whose religion exhibited itself in zeal for the reform of matters of altogther trifling consequence, without any corresponding care for the performance of the most important duties; and to this also, may, with little hesitation, be ascribed his melancholy foreboding that the Reformation would for a time, at least, be overthrown, and that those who had been its chief advocates would perish in its temporary fall. Nothing could remove his presentiment that Gardiner was reserved in prison in the Tower as the instrument of his martyrdom;[1] and this presentiment was in a few years signally realised.

In the month of November, 1550, Latimer, for the first

[1] Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 321.

time since his ordination, paid a visit to Lincolnshire. He may have been requested to preach in that part of the kingdom, as many other eminent preachers were at the time sent to officiate in such counties as seemed most urgently to need their labours. More probably he had been prevailed upon to take this long journey in order to spend some time at Grimsthorpe Castle, with Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk, widow of Charles Brandon, Henry's favourite, a lady of great ability, of exemplary conduct, and highly distinguished for her adherence to the doctrines of the Reformation, for which, indeed, she was subsequently driven into exile. It may be reasonably conjectured that this good lady thought Latimer's failing health might be improved by the journey, and the rest from some of his fatiguing labours in her hospitable halls; and to her kindness in entertaining Latimer and his faithful domestic, Augustine Bernher, we owe the preservation of most of the Reformer's sermons. Whatever may have been the cause that drew him to Lincolnshire, he preached at Stamford on November 9, urging upon his hearers with his customary earnestness a more diligent attention to the duties which the Gospel imposed upon all Christian people, that they might not bring a scandal upon their religion by their vicious conduct. Lincolnshire had been for many years noted for its disaffection; and therefore Latimer did not omit to enlarge upon the necessity of obedience and respect to the civil magistrate, as was naturally enough suggested by his text, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." The reader is by this time so well accustomed to Latimer's manner of dealing with his subject, that any lengthened extracts from his sermon may be forborne; as, however, the conduct of the Reformers has been frequently

misrepresented, and some people seem to imagine that they were a band of turbulent revolutionaries, it is only just to Latimer's memory to insert the following plain exposition of the duties of a subject to his sovereign :—

"When the Parliament, the High Court of this realm, is gathered together, and there it is determined that every man shall pay a fifteenth part of his goods to the King; then commissions come forth, and he that in sight of men, in his cattle, corn, sheep, and other goods, is worth an hundred mark or an hundred pound, will set himself at ten pound: he will be worth no more to the King but after ten pound: tell me now whether this be theft or no? Doth he give to Cæsar that which is due to Cæsar? Doth he not rather rob the King of his bound duty and debt that he owed to the King? Yes, it is very theft; and thou mightest with as good conscience take my cloak or my tippet from me, as so unjustly take or withhold from the King that which the Parliament hath given unto the King. It is thy bounden duty to pay him truly that which is granted: for it is due debt, and upon peril of thy soul thou art bound to obey it. Yea, I will say more: if the King should require of thee an unjust request, yet art thou bound to pay it, and not to resist and rebel against the King. The King, indeed, is in peril of his soul, for asking of an unjust request; and God will in His due time reckon with him for it: but thou must obey thy King, and not take upon thee to judge him. God is the King's judge, and doubtless will grievously punish him if he do anything unrighteously. Therefore pray thou for thy King, and pay him his duty, and disobey him not. And know this, that whensoever there is any unjust exaction laid upon thee, it is a plague and punishment for thy sin, as all other plagues are; as are hunger, death, pestilence, and such other. We marvel we are plagued as we be; and I think verily this unjust and unfaithful dealing with our princes is one great cause of our plague: look therefore every man upon his conscience. Ye shall not be judged by worldly policy at the latter day, but by God's word. . . . Show me one man in all England that is the poorer for paying the King his duty, for being a true-dealing man, a good alms-man, etc. Many have come to poverty by dicing, carding, riot, whoredom, and such like; but never no man by truth, mercy, alms, right dealing with the King."

From Lincolnshire, Latimer returned again to London, and on January 18, 1551, he was appointed with thirty-one others on a royal commission to inquire into the various heresies with which the kingdom was then infested.[1] He was not, however, one of the leading members of the commission, and does not in fact appear to have taken any share in its duties. One unfortunate man, a Dutchman, called George van Paris, was condemned for denying the divinity of the Saviour, and was handed over to the secular power to suffer the extreme penalty assigned by the law for such a heresy.[2]

The year 1551 was not distinguished by any event of very much importance either in the civil or religious history of England. Gardiner, who had been so long confined in the Tower, was at length deposed from his bishopric: every effort had been made to induce him to promise compliance with the doctrines and services of the Reformed Church as by law established; but beyond expressing his willingness not to oppose what had been done, he declined any further to compromise himself. He had in truth acted throughout with singular caution so as not to expose himself to punishment, and yet without any sacrifice of his principles. His deprivation was an illegal stretching of the law, in defence of which it can only be said that in such troublous times it was dangerous to the constitution of the Reformed Church to allow so able an opponent to be at large in full possession of his liberty and of the great influence of his position. Tunstal, also, though a much less dangerous adversary, was arrested on the charge of being accessory to treason, and was imprisoned and subsequently deprived; his real

[1] Rymer's *Fœdera*, xv. 250.
[2] Cranmer's *Register:* King Edward's *Journal.*

crime, in the eyes of such men as Warwick, being that the revenues of his see were enormously great, and offered a most tempting booty to their sacrilegious hands.

No open steps in the promotion of the Reformation were taken during this year; but two measures of some importance were, after much deliberation, finished, and were subsequently sanctioned by royal authority. The first of these was the revision of the Book of Common Prayer, in order to free it from some of those features to which the Continental Reformers had objected as remnants of the old Romish superstition, and as countenancing the belief in the corporeal presence of Christ at the communion. Some other changes and manifest improvements were introduced, and the book was brought very nearly to its present form; indeed, as revised in 1551 and ratified in 1552, the Prayer Book came nearer the ideas of the more advanced Reformers than at any subsequent period. The other measure was the preparation of a series of *Articles* in which the doctrinal teaching of the Church of England should be embodied. Hitherto the *King's Book* and the *Homilies* were the only authorised standards of dogmatic teaching to which the clergy were bound to conform; and it was desirable that some more precise and compendious formula should be compiled. The experience of past years had shown the futility of hoping for any such summary of doctrine from the debates of Convocation: and the *Articles*, forty-two in number, and not essentially different from the present *thirty-nine*, were drawn up by Cranmer alone,[1] after consultation possibly with Ridley, and not impossibly with Latimer, and after a very careful study of similar confessions prepared by the Continental Reformers. They

[1] See Cranmer's examination before Brokes: *Works*, p. 220.

were subsequently submitted to the revision of the six royal chaplains,[1] and were, in 1553, published with Edward's sanction, but seem never to have been discussed in Convocation at all. They have always been received with general approbation by the great body of Reformers; they embody the fundamental principles for which the Protestants had contended; they explicitly condemn many characteristic beliefs and practices of the Church of Rome, and on disputed doctrines they speak with moderation, and leave room for differences of opinion.

Latimer may have had some share with Cranmer in the compiling of the *Articles*, and the revision of the Liturgy; there is no record of any other work in which he was engaged in the early part of 1551. He was no longer the Court preacher as formerly; it may be that he had declined that honour from consciousness of failing strength; it may be also that the leading men in the Council disliked a preacher who so boldly censured their vices, and who was so certain to condemn those designs for a further spoliation of the Church under the guise of purifying it, which were so fashionable amongst the nobles. Grievously as the Church had been already pillaged, it still possessed treasures sufficient to attract the cupidity of the greedy harpies that now swayed the counsels of the sovereign. They looked with envious eyes upon the Communion vessels, the Church furniture, the robes of the clergy (the rich vestments were still retained in the first Prayer Book); and they urged on a further Reformation of the Church, not from any love of simplicity of worship, but from the desire to share in the rich booty which would thus be available for the fortunate plunderers. Latimer was far too shrewd a judge of character to be

[1] *Council Book:* Harleian MSS., 352; Oct. 20, 1552.

deceived by any such hypocritical zeal for pure and simple worship; and he was, therefore, naturally enough disliked and suspected by such men as the new Protector; and from this time he ceased to occupy the prominent position which had hitherto been accorded him. Cranmer shared with him in this loss of public esteem; a younger generation of clergy became the leaders of this new movement; men of great energy; honest and learned, most of them; but young, impetuous, ill-acquainted with the character of the English nation, and ill-qualified to direct and control the Church in such troublous times. While they were zealously attacking everything in the existing ritual of the Church that seemed in any way tinged by the influence of the Church of Rome, the affections of the great bulk of the people were becoming alienated from the Reformation, the brief opportunity of instructing the nation was passing away, and the clergy were being gradually deprived of every source of revenue that had been consecrated by the piety of many generations to support the ordinances of religion. The Council Book is full of grants of Church lands and livings to the courtiers and their parasites; and it seemed likely that, in a short time, the clergy would be, as in the days of the Apostles, compelled to support themselves by manual labour. An ominous cloud began to gather over the nation. Everywhere the voice of complaint was heard. The courtiers, indeed, were accumulating enormous fortunes; but the royal revenues were defrauded, the coinage was debased, and the common people complained of the insolent tyranny of the nobles, and groaned under the unwonted rise in the price of all provisions. To add to the gloom, the sweating-sickness raged during the summer with unprecedented violence. As many as a hundred-and-

twenty people died in London in a single day,—a much greater fatality, in proportion to the population, than has ever occurred in the worst visitation of cholera; and the plague was all the more alarming from the rapidity with which it cut off its victims. Stow relates that during the sickness, seven citizens met one evening at supper, and that next morning six of them had died of the distemper. Among others who perished, were Henry, Duke of Suffolk, and his brother—the sons of that Duchess of Suffolk, with whom, as we suppose, Latimer had spent some time at Grimsthorpe Castle in the close of 1550, and who again, as we shall see, entertained him there in 1552. Intrigues, also, and rumours of conspiracies and rebellions, were rife throughout the year; Somerset, it was said, was anxious to recover that supremacy which he had lost, and was resolved on displacing Northumberland by violence; and for this crime, real or alleged, he was arrested, imprisoned, and, after such a trial as State-prisoners then enjoyed, executed in the beginning of the following year.

In October, in prosecution of an Act of Parliament that had remained inoperative for two years, a Royal Commission was issued for revising and correcting the vast body of ecclesiastical laws; a work of which, down to the present day, the Church of England feels the most pressing need. Latimer was one of the thirty-two Commissioners proposed;[1] but he was never actually engaged in what would have been to him a most uncongenial task; a new Commission was issued in a month, and another Commissioner was substituted in Latimer's room. The work was finished with elaborate care, but it never received any royal sanction; and the

[1] *Council Book.* Harleian MSS., 352.

result of so much labour has thus unfortunately been altogether lost to the Church.

In truth, Latimer may be said to have again retired into private life. From the commencement of 1551 he ceased to take any active part in public affairs; he was no longer "Latimer the King's preacher;" his eloquence had not failed, but had rather ripened with age; but other tongues had captivated the ears of the most ardent Reformers and the most powerful nobles. He does not even appear to have been in London during the last two years of Edward's reign; certainly, London was no longer his ordinary place of residence; he spent his time in visiting amongst his friends, availing himself, of course, of every opportunity of preaching wherever he went. Thus, what London lost the country gained; the eloquence which had for some years been heard chiefly in the Court by noble audiences, was now poured forth with equal copiousness, to delight and instruct humbler listeners in various parts of England. Many of the sermons thus delivered were preserved and printed by the care of his faithful servant Augustine Bernher, and from them,[1] assisted by some slight extraneous hints in other documents, we are able to form a rough notion of Latimer's movements and occupation from the close of 1551 to the death of Edward.

[1] To any one accustomed to investigation, I need not say that the dates prefixed to many of the sermons rather perplex than guide any biographer who endeavours to arrange them. In the older editions the sermons are simply reprinted as they were collected by Bernher, without any attempt at chronological exactness; and this order, or disorder, has been followed by Dr. Watkins in his pretentious edition, in which he announces that he had for the first time arranged them in order of time. Dr. Corrie seems to give up the effort as hopeless; yet, as will be seen, with the help of a Kalendar, it is possible to assign almost all the sermons to their precise date, and thus some light is at length cast on what has so long been a sea of confusion.

Two places we know he visited during this period. At Baxterley, in Warwickshire, a "fair mansion" had been built by John Glover, a man of primitive piety, "living like one who was in heaven already and dead to this world;" who had "distributed the most of his lands to the use of his brethren, and committed the rest to the guiding of his servants and officers," that he might devote himself without interruption to religious contemplation. For many years previously, this pious man was, like Bilney, sunk in despair, believing that he had somehow committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. In his distress he at last came to Latimer, who was, as Fuller quaintly puts it, "confessor-general to all Protestants troubled in mind:" and Latimer has recounted, in his last sermon before King Edward, Glover's perplexities and the peace and comfort which he at length received. A close intimacy of course sprang up between Latimer and Glover; and Baxterley Hall not unfrequently, it is believed, received the great preacher as an inmate.[1] In the year 1552 we know that Latimer had spent some days with John Glover, for on the last day of May, his servant Bernher thus writes to the Swiss Reformer, Bullinger:—

"My master, Doctor Latimer, had intended to write to you, but he has to-morrow to undertake a long and arduous journey, so that the excellent old man, and your most loving friend, is unable to send you a letter at this time; but he especially commands me to salute you in his name as honourably and lovingly as possible."[2]

Among Latimer's sermons, also preserved by Bernher, is one said to have been preached at Baxterley on Christmas Day, 1552;[3] and though it may be doubted whether the

[1] Dugdale's *Warwickshire*, p. 1054: the son of Glover's brother was called *Hugh*, doubtless after Latimer.

[2] *Zurich Letters*, vol. i. p. 361.

[3] Latimer's *Remains*, p. 84. In all the editions it is followed by a sermon said to have been preached the next day (St. Stephen's Day) at

year is not a mistake for 1553, it at least confirms the tradition that Latimer was no infrequent visitor at Baxterley. The sermon is a plain practical comment on the narrative of the nativity, carefully adapted, as was Latimer's custom, to the daily duties and the special temptations of his humble audiences; and in an age when petty hamlets were usually ill-provided with preachers, we may hope that the honest faithful words of Latimer were found useful and edifying by many.

But it seems certain that the most of Latimer's time, during what yet remained of Edward's reign, was spent under the hospitable roof of the Duchess Dowager of Suffolk. That lady had lost her two sons by the terrible sweating-sickness of 1551, and she stood in need of such consolation as the presence of Latimer, and his advice and example, were sure to afford. A wealthy heiress, raised to the highest rank by her marriage with the Duke of Suffolk, she was still more distinguished by her zealous adherence to the doctrines of the Reformers, her piety, and her care for her numerous household. She had already, as we have supposed, invited Latimer in 1550 to share the splendour of her kindly home; and in 1552 Grimsthorpe was for many months the residence of the Reformer. He preached, of course, in the neighbouring churches; and, not content with this, at the request of the Duchess, he expounded the Lord's Prayer to her household servants in the great hall of the castle, which her late husband had built and had gaily decorated with some of that magnificent Gobelin tapestry which his former wife, Mary

Grimsthorpe, no trifling journey for a man of Latimer's age even in our railway days, and in those times an impossible achievement. It seems probable, however, on a careful examination of the sermons, that *that* on Christmas Day may have preceded or succeeded that on St. Stephen's Day by a year: the dates are evidently mere rough guesses.

Tudor, Queen-Dowager of France, had brought him as part of her dowry.[1] Two volumes of these sermons, preached at Grimsthorpe and the adjacent parts of Lincolnshire, "collected and gathered by Augustine Bernher, his servant," were printed in the reign of Elizabeth, by John Daye, in 1562 and 1571, and have been repeatedly reprinted. Including the seven sermons on the Lord's Prayer, they amount to the number of twenty-eight, and are the most extensive collection of Latimer's sermons which we possess. They were preached chiefly in 1552, in the months of January and February,[2] and at the close of the year in November and December. Some of the sermons would even seem to have been preached in the previous year;[3] so that it may with much probability be conjectured that Latimer remained at Grimsthorpe from November, 1551, to the spring of 1552; then left for Baxterley, and returned again to Grimsthorpe in the end of that year.

These Lincolnshire sermons have all the peculiar characteristics of Latimer's style. They are, as usual with him, carefully suited to the position of his audience, and are addressed to the appropriate duties and dangers of their station in life. They are marked by the same discursive method of treating his subject, interspersing plain practical exhortation to duty, with occasional sallies of Latimer's peculiar humour, and with interesting biographical recollections of a life that had been long and eventful. Vice rather than error, moral wickedness

[1] Leland's *Itinerarium.*

[2] The sermons printed last by Corrie, and apparently referred by him to 1553, belong *certainly* to 1552: for in 1553 there were only *three* Sundays after Epiphany, in 1552 there were *five;* hence the sermon for the *fifth* Sunday after Epiphany must have been in 1552: besides the dates, "Second Sunday after Epiphany being the 17th day of January," etc., apply only to 1552: in 1553 the 17th of January was a Tuesday.

[3] *e.g.*, that on the 24th Sunday after Trinity, for in 1552 there were only twenty-three Sundays after Trinity.

rather than doctrinal heterodoxy, were always the chief objects of Latimer's most vehement denunciations; and in his pages, as in the drier and colder pages of the Statute Book, we may read the character of the times, and may picture to ourselves the age, with all its vices and follies. His sermons, one can clearly perceive, notwithstanding all the blinding influence of modern culture, must have been intensely interesting to those who heard them; the variety of the matter, the piquancy of the style, the homeliness of the language, the earnestness of the preacher, were all calculated to deepen the impression of his words. These Lincolnshire discourses are scarcely known to the mere general literary dilettante, who contents himself with a hurried perusal of the more famous sermons on the Card and on the Plough: but they will well repay the reader; and if space permitted, many extracts of high merit might here have been added, as illustrations of Latimer's latest style of pulpit-oratory. They prove beyond all question that age had not damped his energy nor enfeebled his intellect: these latest sermons are as vigorous as his earliest; they exhibit no falling-off in mental acuteness, whilst they give abundant proofs of a growing ripeness of Christian wisdom and grace—the natural fruit of a life spent in the honest service of God.

Of this period spent at Grimsthorpe, in useful unobtrusive labour, only one incidental illustration has been preserved, which, were we to interpret it *au sérieux*, would certainly be a striking contribution to the biography of Latimer. In the State Paper Office, there is a letter from the Duchess Dowager of Suffolk to her neighbour Cecil, ("of Burghley House, by Stamford Town,") then just beginning to occupy a conspicuous position in the political world. The letter is assigned to the month of June, 1552,

and is written and spelled so badly as almost to defy the efforts of modern perseverance to decipher it.[1] It commences as follows:—

"By the late coming of this buck to you, you shall perceive that wild things be not ready at commandment; for truly I have caused my keeper, yea and went forth with him myself on Saturday at night after I came home" [perhaps from visiting Cecil, possibly from London], "which was a marvel for me: *but so desirous was I to have had one for Mr. Latimer to have sent after him to his wife's churching; but there is no remedy but she must be churched without it.*"

The conclusion must not be omitted:—

"From Grimsthorpe, this present Wednesday, at six o'clock in the morning, and like a sluggard in my bed. . . . Master Bertie" [her future husband] "is at London, to conclude if he can with the heirs" [the Marquis of Dorset, father of Lady Jane Grey, was the heir of the young Duke of Suffolk]: "for I would gladly discharge the trust wherein my lord did leave me" [the charge, viz., of his two sons, just dead of the sweating-sickness], "before I did, for any man's pleasure, anything else" [before marrying again].

There can be no reasonable doubt that it is to Hugh Latimer that the Duchess refers in this letter; and if we were to accept seriously what she writes, then we should suppose that Latimer had recently been married. Parsons, the Jesuit, indeed, in one of his violent tirades against the Reformers, enumerates Latimer among the priests who, in defiance of their vow of celibacy, had contracted marriage; but as his authority is not great among historical inquirers, and his list is in some cases demonstrably false, his allegation that Latimer was married has always been treated as an idle invention. It may be admitted that Parsons' assertion receives some countenance from the Duchess of Suffolk's letter; and the question is, perhaps, worth a little more investigation, as an in-

[1] State Paper Office: Edward VI., vol. xiv. No. 47.

teresting fact in Latimer's personal history. On the whole, however, we are inclined to treat the Duchess's allusion to the churching of Latimer's wife as a joke. The lady had a high reputation for wit; and the rest of the letter, except the postscript, is conceived in a jocular vein. Parliament, it may be added, had at length placed the marriages of the clergy on their proper footing, and had decreed that they were no longer to be considered merely as things tolerated to prevent greater evils, but as honourable and lawful as the marriages of laymen. Latimer, also, in his sermons at Grimsthorpe, had made frequent allusion to the subject of marriage; and in those circumstances, it seems not an improbable supposition, that a high-spirited and witty lady like the Duchess, herself on the eve of her second marriage, was in the habit of joking the good old man about the prospect of his taking a wife; and we have seen enough of Latimer to know that no one would more thoroughly enjoy a little pleasant joke.

The road from Baxterley to Grimsthorpe lay through Leicestershire, past Latimer's own birthplace; and we may believe that in his journeys he did not omit to inquire after and to visit any of the old friends or younger members of his family that were still surviving; and doubtless, also, though no record of any sermons preached in Leicestershire has been preserved, he did not neglect to preach in a county which had so many claims upon him.

While Latimer was thus occupying himself in the most sacred duties of his holy calling, enjoying the calm of the country, and the sweet intercourse of friends, not without uneasy anticipations of the future, the reign and the life of Edward were manifestly drawing to a close. The young King had never been in very robust health; in the spring

of 1552 he was attacked with measles and small-pox, and was much enfeebled; and before the commencement of 1553 it was plain to all that a fatal consumption had settled on him. The public affairs of this period were not of very much importance. The Parliament of 1552 sanctioned the revised Book of Common Prayer; made some Acts for the better observance of fasts and holy-days, and the services of the Church; and, as we have already mentioned, gave a higher position to the marriages of the clergy. Northumberland still bore chief sway; every position of influence was held by his creatures; and, under their auspices, the spoliation of the Church proceeded as before. He was aware, however, that the people disliked him; and the Parliament, having dared to thwart and oppose some of his measures, was dissolved, and a new one was summoned for March 1553. Of its proceedings no note need be taken here; its temper may be judged of by the fact already referred to, that it declined to pass a Bill that no one should hold any church living unless he was at least in deacon's orders: from such rulers the Reformation had little to expect.

But it mattered little what spirit animated Parliament; the reign of Edward was clearly verging to its termination, and all minds were occupied with the succession to the throne. The next heir to the throne, the Princess Mary, had resolutely refused to adopt the changes in religion which the Parliaments of Edward had introduced; and she was, therefore, extremely odious to many of the English Reformers, who were desirous to set aside her claims. No one was more averse to her succession than the young King himself, who was deeply distressed by the fear that the Protestant religion, which he had been so anxious to establish, might be overthrown at his

death; and, prompted by the advice of Northumberland, who was ever at hand to promote his own intrigues, he caused a futile and illegal document to be prepared, assigning the crown, on his demise, to Lady Jane Grey, the eldest granddaughter of the Duke of Suffolk and Mary Tudor, the youngest sister of Henry VIII. On this ill-advised "device for the succession," with its long train of unhappy consequences, and on the other intrigues of the time, it would be superfluous here to dilate; the general history of the period is only too copious on those melancholy subjects.

Edward died on July 6, commending to God, in his last words, the people of England, with the prayer that He would "defend the nation from Papistry, and would maintain His true religion." His illness had been painful and lingering, but he endured it with exemplary piety and fortitude; and in the midst of all his sufferings he found leisure to superintend the foundation of two of the noblest charities in the world, Christ's Hospital, and St. Bartholomew's, for the education of the young, and the healing of the sick. At his death Edward was only in his sixteenth year; but he had already given indications of practical abilities of a very high order, such as would have admirably qualified him to wield the sceptre of that great nation over which his birth placed him as sovereign. But his youth, and the failing health of the last two years of his life, threw the whole of the royal authority into the hands of Northumberland and his partisans. For the weakness, and lawless violence, and general discontent that disfigure his reign, Edward himself was in no way responsible; such misfortunes almost invariably attend a minority; and it has been one of the great blessings of the English nation that its

throne has so seldom been filled by a child. Many, who had trembled under the iron rule of Henry, regretted the want of his guiding hand to control the turbulent and impetuous reign of his successor.

Of Edward, individually, friendly historians have spoken in the most enthusiastic panegyric, and even Romish writers have expressed themselves in language of almost unalloyed approbation. His genuine and unaffected piety, his amiable disposition, his attention to religious duties, his care for the poor, his anxious wish to benefit his subjects, endeared him to his countrymen; and they lamented his untimely decease, as the Jews had mourned the premature death of Josiah, the last hope of their nation.

In his reign the Reformation apparently made very considerable progress. All the characteristic doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome were abolished; the mass had disappeared, with its dogmas of transubstantiation, and corporal presence, and propitiatory sacrifice; purgatory, the invocation of saints, the adoration of images, the worship of the virgin, the celibacy of the clergy, had all been purged out of the Reformed Church of England; the services of the Church were entirely conducted in the native English language; and the authorized creed was, in all matters of importance, in accordance with the creeds of all the Protestant Churches abroad. These were great steps in advance of what had been effected under the reign of Henry; but the real progress did not keep pace with this great legislative growth of the Reformation: the Church was agitated by fierce internal debates; the Reformation had ceased to be synonymous, in clergy or in laity, with greater devotion to duty, and greater purity of life; the Church had been

pillaged to an extent that seriously crippled its usefulness; a large proportion of the nation had been alienated from the Reformation, and a reaction had become imminent and inevitable. Thus there is a considerable amount of truth in both of the opposing views, maintained by different writers, as to the progress of the Reformation under Edward. To some it appears that *scarcely* anything had been accomplished in Henry's time, and that in Edward's reign the progress was rapid and satisfactory: while to others, Edward's reign seems to have well-nigh proved fatal to all true religion; and they accordingly regard his early death as a great national deliverance from impending ruin. Both theories have somewhat exaggerated that peculiar view of the truth which they have adopted, and have too much ignored that maintained by their opponents; the reign of Edward was highly favourable to the progress of the Reformation, if we regard the external freedom and rapid development of the Church; yet it seems equally certain that its practical operation was in many respects unfriendly to the prospects of true religion; and it is scarcely a paradox to assert that a prolongation of his rule, such as it had become under the misguidance of Northumberland, would have been more disastrous to the cause of the Reformation than the persecution of Mary.

CHAPTER VIII.

Latimer the Martyr: Reign of Mary, 1553-1555.

For some days, the death of Edward was kept secret, Northumberland having not yet completed his designs for promoting the succession of Lady Jane Grey. On July 11, however, finding concealment impossible, the Council ordered her to be proclaimed Queen of England; and they at the same time wrote to Mary, reminding her that "she had been declared illegitimate and uninheritable to the crown," and requiring her to abandon her pretensions and not disturb the Government. The prospects of Lady Jane's partisans were gloomy from the first: it was noted that her proclamation was coldly received by the citizens of London, notwithstanding their known attachment to the Reformed faith. Mary's headquarters were in Suffolk, at Framlingham Castle; the Roman Catholics rallied round her with alacrity; and many Protestants, trusting to her assurance that all her subjects should enjoy full liberty of conscience, repaired to her standard. In a few days it was plain to every one that the cause of Lady Jane Grey was desperate; her forces melted away; the city looked on coldly; even the Council were chiefly anxious to make peace with Mary; Ridley's sermon at Paul's Cross in defence of Lady Jane Grey's title produced no conviction in the public mind; in nine

days her reign was at an end, she ceased to be a queen, and was a prisoner in the Tower. On July 19, Mary was proclaimed Queen in London; "and," writes an eye-witness, "great was the triumph here at London; for my time I never saw the like, and by the report of others the like was never seen: the number of caps that were thrown up at the proclamation was not to be told: the bonfires were without number; and what with shouting and crying of the people, and ringing of bells, there could no man hear almost what another said."[1]

The political occurrences of Queen Mary's reign; the execution of Northumberland, of his son, and of the accomplished Lady Jane Grey; the Spanish marriage; the rebellion of Wyat; the French war; these are sufficiently detailed in the general history of the period, and are foreign to the purpose of this biography. Our interest will be confined to the religious occurrences of her reign, and to the personal narrative of Latimer's life. The great feature of her reign is, of course, the deliberate attempt, by force of persecution, to undo all that had been accomplished by the legislation of the previous twenty-four years; and to bring back the English nation into submission to the Papal See. There seems only too good reason, unfortunately, for fearing that Mary's attempt might have been successful, had it been conducted with anything like prudence and moderation. For the Reformation had not gained in popularity in the closing years of the reign of Edward. The English nation has never loved sweeping changes; it has always disliked mere doctrinal controversies; it has, above all, manifested at all times an extreme aversion to any deference paid to foreign influence; and thus, the active

[1] From an interesting fragment of a history of Mary's reign, in the shape of letters, by a Protestant writer. Harleian MSS., 353.

legislation of Edward's reign changing everything, and apparently proposing to mould the constitution of the English Church after the pattern adopted in some small Swiss towns, alienated from the Reformation great numbers who had cheerfully acquiesced in the proceedings of Henry; who were willing to follow the guidance of Cranmer and Latimer; but drew back when Hooper and Northumberland seemed to bear the chief sway. The golden opportunity of instructing the people during Edward's reign had been let slip almost unemployed; the universities were destitute of students; the churches were badly supplied with preachers; in many places the ordinances of religion were scarcely ever celebrated; and that ignorance, which has always been the great strength of Romanism, was again settling down upon the land.[1] The old vices and corruptions of the religious houses and the monastic orders, had been almost forgotten in the lapse of twenty years; but the tradition of their charity to the poor would be related with fond exaggeration by those who were disgusted with the shameless rapine of the nobles, and were distressed by the general rise in the price of all the necessaries of life. A feeling of discontent, once excited, is never very accurate in tracing the causes of the evils under which it suffers; and the common people, labouring under many hardships, could easily be taught to assign them all to the great religious changes which had taken place in the nation. Thus, from a multiplicity of causes, there had been produced a wide-spread feeling of indifference to the Reformation, if not of positive aversion from it; and along with this there was a tendency to look back with a kindly

[1] I have not thought it necessary to subjoin proofs of statements which could be substantiated by volumes of evidence, which, indeed, only gross ignorance can call in question.

regret to some of the abolished institutions round which time had thrown a halo of picturesque and venerable beauty. No accurate gauging of the extent to which such sentiments prevailed is possible; but the ease with which the party of Lady Jane Grey was suppressed, shows conclusively the general apathy that prevailed, and the numerical weakness of the zealous Reformers. In these circumstances, almost all historians admit that, so far as human foresight can presage the future, the English nation might have been brought back again to its former faith by Mary, had she been politic enough to present the least repulsive side of Popery to her subjects; had she been content with slow and gradual retrograde steps; had she maintained for some time those promises of toleration and impartial justice which she had made at the commencement of her reign. And there were not wanting counsellors who strenuously urged her to adopt these measures: such was the advice of the Emperor Charles v.; such was, in the main, the policy that Gardiner recommended. Happily for England, Mary was a morose bigot; her ideas of her duty would not allow of any compromise, or any temporizing with heretics; her husband probably encouraged her to the bloody course which she pursued; and men were not wanting to lend themselves as willing instruments in any policy, however cruel, for purging the land from all stain of heresy. All that was most repugnant in the Romish religion was thus, not kept out of sight, but made conspicuous; men's eyes were thus rudely opened to the real character of that system whose inherent vices they had begun to forget and to palliate; the true nature of the contest was made manifest; minor differences among Protestants were forgotten; apathy was awakened into earnestness; the blood of the martyrs again became the

seed of the Church; the flames and the stake preached with more convincing eloquence than the most pious or learned preacher; the doctrines of the Reformation found converts on all sides; and when Elizabeth succeded to the throne the tide had turned, and the great majority of the nation were clearly in favour of the Reformers, converted by those very means which had been employed as the surest instruments for confirming their allegiance to the Romish faith.

Gardiner was released from his confinement in the Tower, and was made Lord Chancellor, with the supreme administration of affairs. He was stern and resolute enough, and capable of any severity that might seem necessary to promote his purposes; but he was much too sagacious to be systematically cruel, and if Mary had been guided in all respects by his advice, her reign would have inflicted a more permanent injury on the Reformation. But there were others whose impetuosity could not be kept within bounds; and in a very few days the promised moderation with which Mary had at first allayed the fears of her Protestant subjects, was forgotten. Bonner's chaplain, a foolish headstrong man like Bonner himself, exhibited the insolence of his triumph in such an offensive manner, while preaching at Paul's Cross, that a riot ensued; and but for the interference of Bradford and Rogers, the two well-known martyrs, his folly would have cost him his life. This was at once seized as an excuse for the first open proceedings against the Reformation: under colour of the necessity of preserving the public peace, all persons were forbidden to preach or expound Scripture without a special licence from the Queen. As it was very unlikely that any of the Reforming preachers would receive Mary's licence, silence was thus enforced

upon them all; and a subsequent royal proclamation, empowering Gardiner to licence whom he thought discreet and well qualified, and to authorize them to preach where he pleased, completed the discomfiture of the Reformers by filling their churches with active propagators of Romish doctrine. The foreign Protestants who had settled in London, encouraged by Edward and Cranmer, were ordered to leave England; and many Englishmen who were alarmed at the aspect of affairs, fled in disguise, to find a refuge where some of them had found it before, among the Protestant cities of Germany and Switzerland.

In October Parliament assembled, and proceeded to legislate on the religion of the country. Care had been taken, by somewhat violent methods it is said, to secure a majority favourable to Mary's views; and the legislation was of a very sweeping and summary kind. All the laws concerning religion passed in King Edward's time, were, after some debate and opposition in the House of Commons, entirely repealed; and it was enacted that the nation should revert to those forms of religious worship which had been used in the last year of Henry's reign. Even this Parliament, however, was not looked upon as sufficiently safe by Mary, and it was dissolved. More active measures were demanded by the ardent adherents of Popery, who clamoured for the punishment of their opponents, and were dissatisfied with the tardy progress hitherto made towards that consummation. Such of the clergy as had ventured to preach in defiance of the Queen's proclamation, were deprived of their livings and imprisoned; but this did not suffice to gratify that spirit of revenge which had been waiting for more than twenty years for its prey. The rebellion of Wyat, though unconnected with religion, furnished the excuse for proceeding

to harsher measures. The execution of Lady Jane Grey and her husband, was almost an inevitable result; for a rival was dangerous when treason had begun to manifest itself. Injunctions were issued for a new visitation of the clergy; those who had married were to be deprived; all the ceremonies and holidays of Henry's reign were to be restored; and the people were to be compelled to come to church and join in the services of religion. A second and a third Parliament, both assembling in 1554, completed the work. The nation was solemnly reconciled to Rome, and Cardinal Pole granted them absolution in the Pope's name; all the laws passed by Henry against the Papal supremacy were formally repealed; the statutes against heretics were revived in all their severity; and the bishops, now invested with full authority to persecute, were instigated to that career of cruelty which has made the reign of Mary for ever infamous. It is superfluous to enter into the oft-debated question of the relative guilt of the various leading actors in those bloody scenes. Mary, Gardiner, Pole, Philip, even Bonner, have each found apologists who have exercised their learning and ingenuity in whitewashing characters that have come down to us black with the execrations of ten generations. The details of the martyrdoms as narrated in Foxe, have been questioned, and denied, and ridiculed as idle gossip, or malicious inventions. But no skill in detecting minor flaws in Foxe's voluminous and unmethodical compilations, has to any extent affected the general verdict of the English nation; no sophistry can conjure out of the history of England the gross and palpable fact that, in three years, nearly three hundred men and women, including some of the noblest and best of English people, perished at the stake rather than renounce their faith. Into the general martyrology

of this wretched reign, the black spot in the annals of England, we are happily not required to enter; we have traced it sufficiently far for the purposes of this narrative, and may now return to glean such notices of Latimer's closing career as have been preserved.

At Mary's accession to the throne, Latimer seems to have been in Warwickshire, spending some days of happy intercourse with John Glover in the midst of the anxious suspense of the period. He had now for some time ceased to take any prominent part in the direction of public affairs, and he had certainly not co-operated in any active steps for supporting Lady Jane Grey; but he enjoyed too high a reputation with the common people to be left undisturbed, and, accordingly, no time was lost in bringing his career, as the great apostle of the English Reformation, to a close. On September 4, the Council ordered a "letter of appearance to be directed to Mr. Hugh Latimer;"[1] and a pursuivant was sent down, at the instigation of his old antagonist Gardiner, to summon him from Warwickshire to London. Latimer received from a pious humble Reformer, John Careless, of Coventry, timely warning of the approach of the messenger to arrest him; and if he had wished to escape, he had abundant opportunity for doing so. But Latimer knew too well that now the crisis was come for "playing the man;" and though he had always condemned any voluntary courting of martyrdom, he could perceive that now a faithful man might have lawful cause for exposing himself to death. Instead of attempting to escape, therefore, he occupied himself in making preparations for his journey to London. The messenger marvelled at his resolution, but Latimer answered (the words have been

[1] *Privy Council Book.* Harleian MSS., 643.

preserved by his servant, who was probably present), "My friend, you be a welcome messenger to me. And be it known unto you, and to all the world, that I go as willingly to London at this present, being called by my Prince to render a reckoning of my doctrine, as ever I was at any place in the world. I doubt not but that God, as He hath made me worthy to preach His Word before two excellent princes, so will He able me to witness the same unto the third, either to her comfort, or discomfort eternally." [1]

The pursuivant, having delivered his summons, returned to London, leaving Latimer to follow. This unwonted conduct, Bernher thinks, was adopted by the express orders of the Council, to allow Latimer the opportunity of escaping; for "they knew that his constancy should deface them in their Popery, and confirm the godly in their truth." The motives of the Council were, of course, kept secret; and Bernher's conjecture need not be received as of much authority: still, as Latimer had not, in point of fact, been guilty of any action that rendered him liable to punishment, it is by no means an improbable supposition that the Council did hope to work upon his fears; and beyond all question it would have been a great triumph for the Romish party, if they could have induced so conspicuous a champion of the Reformation as Latimer to abandon his post through fear of personal injury.

Latimer, however, had no hesitation as to the course which he ought to pursue. He at once repaired to London, to appear before the Council at Westminster. It was in no vain hope of safety that he undertook the journey; so deep-rooted in his mind was the con-

[1] Bernher's *Introduction to Sermons on the Lord's Prayer.*

viction that he was going to his death, that as he bade farewell to his dear friends at Baxterley, he must have felt as St. Paul did when he held his last interview with his converts at Ephesus. On his way to the Council he passed through Smithfield, the customary place of martyrdom, though not yet rendered infamous by the cruelty of Bonner; and, with a presentiment of his fate, he remarked "merrily," says the old chronicler, "that Smithfield had long groaned for him."

"On September 13," according to the brief narrative of the Privy Council Book,[1] "Mr. Hugh Latimer, clerk, appeared before the Lords, and for his seditious demeanour was committed to the Tower, there to remain a close prisoner, having attending upon him one Austy" [Augustine Bernher], "his servant." Latimer had not, like Cranmer or Ridley, committed any overt act of sedition; and the seditious demeanour for which he was imprisoned refers exclusively to his personal bearing when before the Council. Gardiner, his most determined opponent, was present, and we need not be at any loss to understand, therefore, the nature of the examination to which he would be subjected, or of the promises which he would be required to make. "He did behave himself stoutly in Christ's cause before the Council," says Bernher with his customary vagueness,[2] "and was content to bear most patiently all the mocks and taunts given him by the scornful and pestilent Papists." Latimer himself has given us one short but eminently satisfactory glance into the proceedings of his trial. "Diotrephes" [*i.e.*, Gardiner, who "loved the pre-eminence"], "now of late did ever harp upon unity, unity" [the never-failing theme

[1] Harleian MSS., 643.
[2] *Introduction to Sermons on the Lord's Prayer.*

of the Romish controversialist]. "Yea, sir," quoth I, "but in verity, not in Popery. Better is diversity, than a unity in Popery. I had nothing again but scornful taunts, with commandment to the Tower."[1] Next day Cranmer was sent to the same prison; Ridley was already confined there; and thus the three great martyrs of the English Reformation, who had been for years associated in the glorious task of purifying the Church of England, were brought together for a short period of calm retrospect and preparation, before the fiery trial which awaited them.

The phrase "a close prisoner," in Latimer's sentence, was no figure of speech; the unfortunate prisoners were rigorously confined within their cells, which were cold, damp, and unwholesome even to the most vigorous youthful frames, and threatened to be fatal to men enfeebled by age like Latimer and Cranmer. The modern philanthropy which insists that even the hardened inmates of our prisons shall have due attention paid to their physical well-being, was unknown in those rougher ages; and it was not until it was reported that "Cranmer and divers others have been evil at ease in their bodies for want of air," that the Council authorized the lieutenant of the Tower to suffer them "to have the liberty of the walk within the garden of the Tower."[2] The rigour exhibited towards these imprisoned prelates was no exceptional severity, but only the customary prison discipline of the period. Fortunately, they were not entirely destitute of some mitigations of their confinement, as their own faithful servants were allowed to attend them, and they were permitted to have intercourse with each other in writing.

Latimer's demeanour in prison was such as might

[1] Conference between Ridley and Latimer in prison. Foxe, vii. 410.
[2] *Council Book, ubi supra.*

have been anticipated from what we have seen of his life. He spent much of his time in prayer, and in the careful reading of the New Testament, which he now perused with all the earnest attention of one who knew that he would soon be called upon to defend, before an unfriendly audience, those great truths of God's Word in whose strength he had lived, and for which he was now willing to die. So calm and self-possessed was he, that he still retained that quiet sense of humour which had distinguished him through life; and even the seriousness of his position, and the gloominess of the Tower, could not repress his pleasant tendency to an occasional joke. His mind was made up; the way of duty was clear; he had deliberately chosen the part he was to play, and he trusted that by God's help he would be carried in safety to the end, whatever might be the dangers through which he was required to pass. Even after his imprisonment in the Tower, he might, had he so minded, have regained his liberty. On the day of Mary's coronation (October 1), such was the stir and excitement, that "neither gates, doors, nor prisoners were looked to;" but like another confessor, who was then urged to avail himself of so favourable an opportunity, Latimer would have said, "to escape were to make myself guilty; I know no just cause why I should be in prison; I will expect" [wait for] "God's will."[1]

Of the general character and conduct of his prison life, Foxe has given us an excellent summary, which coming to us ratified with the commendation of Bernher, Latimer's attendant in prison, may be received as in all respects trustworthy.

"He sustained most patient imprisonment a long time, yet he

[1] Narrative of Dr. Sandys. Foxe, viii. 593.

showed himself not only patient but also cheerful. Yea, such a valiant spirit the Lord gave him, that he was able not only to despise the terribleness of prisons and torments, but also to deride and laugh to scorn the doings of his enemies; as it is not unknown to the ears of many, what he answered to the lieutenant, being then in the Tower: for when the lieutenant's man upon a time came to him, the aged father, kept without fire in the frosty winter, and well-nigh starved with cold, merrily bade the man tell his master, that if he did not look the better to him, perchance he would deceive him. The lieutenant, hearing this, bethought himself of these words, and fearing lest that indeed he thought to make some escape, beginneth to charge him with his words, reciting the same unto him which his man had told him before, how that if he were not better looked unto, perchance he would deceive him.

"'Yea, master Lieutenant, so I said,' quoth he, 'for you look, I think, that I should burn; but except you let me have some fire, I am like to deceive your expectation, for I am like here to starve for cold.'

"Many suchlike answers and reasons, merry, but savoury, coming not from a vain mind, but from a constant and quiet reason, proceeded from that man, declaring a firm and stable heart, little passing" [caring] "for all this great blustering of their terrible threats, but rather deriding the same."[1]

The winter months in the Tower were spent by Latimer neither unprofitably, nor, on the whole, unpleasantly, in written conference with Ridley. The prisoners were apparently allowed to communicate with each other in writing; at all events, their servants were allowed to pass from one cell to the other, and no sufficient care was used to prevent them holding intercourse through their intervention. They were well aware that they would soon be called upon publicly to defend their faith, and they wisely employed their leisure in the Tower in preparing themselves for this formidable ordeal. Ridley, especially, as the youngest of the three, and least experienced in braving danger and death,

[1] Foxe, vii. 464: posterity would gladly have exchanged some of Foxe's own tedious digressions for a few of Latimer's "merry sayings."

was anxious to profit by the learning and experience of his associates, and of Latimer in particular, for there seems to have been some difficulty in maintaining communication with Cranmer. In pursuance of this wish, Ridley appears to have written down his reasons for rejecting the mass, and to have sent them to Latimer and Cranmer, who made copious marginal notes on what was written. Still further to prepare himself for the combat, Ridley drew up a series of objections which an antagonist might urge against his conduct, containing the customary arguments which Romish polemics in all ages have advanced against Protestantism; to each objection he appended what he deemed an appropriate and sufficient reply: and this also was submitted to Latimer for further comment. These two papers, the conjoint work of Ridley and Latimer, a brief but admirable defence of Protestantism against Popery, were carefully preserved; Ridley gave copies of them to one of his former chaplains, and they were printed in 1555, under the title of "Certain Godly, Learned, and Comfortable Conferences between the two reverend fathers, and holy martyrs of Christ, Nicolas Ridley, late Bishop of London, and Hugh Latimer, sometime Bishop of Worcester, during the time of their imprisonments."[1] Even as a controversial manual the book is not without its value, it is so admirably clear and scriptural; and it supplies the biographer with interesting glimpses into the prison life and the private character of the writers. The conclusion of the work is singularly touching in its simple honest earnestness and faith.

"Ye see, good father" [it is Ridley that writes], "how I have in words only made, as it were, a flourish before the fight which I shortly look after, and how I have begun to prepare certain kinds of

[1] Printed in Foxe in a very careless and confused manner, the two conferences being jumbled into one.

weapons to fight against the adversaries of Christ, and to muse with myself how the darts of the old enemy may be borne off, and after what sort I may smite him again with the Sword of the Spirit. I learn also hereby to be in use with armour, and to assay how I can go armed.

"In Tynedale, where I was born, not far from the Scottish borders, I have known my countrymen watch night and day in their harness, such as they had, that is, in their jacks, and their spears in their hands (you call them northern gads), especially when they had any privy warning of the coming of the Scots. And so doing, although at every such bickering some of them spent their lives, yet by such means, like pretty men, they defended their country. And those that so died, I think that before God they died in a good quarrel, and their offspring and progeny all the country loved them the better for their father's sakes.

"And in the quarrel of Christ our Saviour, in the defence of His own Divine ordinances, by the which he giveth unto us life and immortality; yea, in the quarrel of faith and Christian religion, wherein resteth our everlasting salvation, shall we not watch? Shall we not go always armed, ever looking when our adversary (which, like a roaring lion, seeketh whom he may devour), shall come upon us by reason of our slothfulness? Yea, and woe be unto us, if he can oppress us at unawares, which undoubtedly he will do, if he find us sleeping. Let us awake, therefore; for if the good man of the house knew what hour the thief would come, he would surely watch, and not suffer his house to be broken up. Let us awake therefore, I say, and let us not suffer our house to be broken up.

"Good father, forasmuch as I have determined with myself to pour forth these my cogitations into your bosom, here, methinketh, I see you suddenly lifting up your head towards heaven, after your manner, and then looking upon me with your prophetical countenance, and speaking unto me with these or like words: 'Trust not, my son' (I beseech you, vouchsafe me the honour of this name, for in so doing I shall think myself both honoured and loved of you), 'Trust not, I say, my son, to these word-weapons, for the kingdom of God is not in words, but in power. And remember always the words of the Lord, 'Do not imagine aforehand what and how you will speak, for it shall be given you even in that same hour, what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.'

"I pray you therefore, father, pray for me, that I may cast my

whole care upon Him, and trust upon Him in all perils. For I know and am surely persuaded, that whatsoever I can imagine or think aforehand, it is nothing except He assist me with His Spirit, when the time is. I beseech you therefore, father, pray for me, that such a complete harness of the Spirit, such boldness of mind, may be given unto me, that I may out of a true faith say with David, 'I will not trust in my bow, and it is not my sword that shall save me,' etc. I beseech you pray, pray that I may enter this fight only in the name of God, and that when all is past, I, being not overcome, through His gracious aid, may remain and stand fast in Him till that day of the Lord, in the which, to them that obtain the victory, shall be given the lively manna to eat, and a triumphant crown for evermore.

"Now, father, I pray you help me to buckle on this gear a little better; for ye know the deepness of Satan, being an old soldier, and you have collared with him ere now, blessed be God that hath ever aided you so well. I suppose he may well hold you at the bay. But truly, he will not be so willing, I think, to join with you, as with us younglings. Sir, I beseech you, let your servant read this my babbling unto you; and now and then, as it shall seem unto you best, let your pen run on my book. Spare not to blot my paper; I give you good leave."

To this Latimer, perhaps from want of paper, merely appends the following brief note:—

"Sir, I have caused my man not only to read your armour unto me, but also to write it out. For it is not only no bare armour, but also well-buckled armour. I see not how it could be better. I thank you even from the bottom of my heart for it; and my prayer shall you not lack, trusting that you do the like for me. For, indeed, *there* is the help."[1]

He had, however, in a previous part of the conference, anticipated Ridley's wishes, and given a touching answer to his request.

"Good, my lord, be of good cheer in the Lord, with due consideration (of) what He requireth of you, and what He doth promise you.

[1] In the edition of Ridley, by the Parker Society, this passage is erroneously assigned to Ridley; even Foxe has correctly given it to Latimer.

Our common enemy shall do no more than God will permit him: 'God is faithful, which will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength.' Be at a point what ye will stand unto, stick unto that, and let them both say and do what they list. They can but kill the body, which otherwise is of itself mortal. Neither yet shall they do that when they list, but when God will suffer them, when the hour appointed is come. To use many words with them, it shall be but in vain, now that they have a bloody and deadly law prepared for them. But it is very requisite that ye give a reasonable account of your faith, if they will quietly hear you; else ye know, in a wicked place of judgment a man may keep silence, after the example of Christ. Let them not deceive you with their sophistical sophisms and fallacies; you know that many false things have more appearance of truth, than things that be most true. Therefore Paul giveth us a watchword, saying, 'Let no man deceive you with likeliness of speech.' Neither is it requisite, that with the contentious you should follow strife of words, which tend to no edification, but to the subversion of the hearers, and the vain bragging and ostentation of the adversaries.

"Fear of death doth most persuade a great number. Be well ware of that argument; for that persuaded Shaxton, as many men thought, after that he had once made a good profession openly before the judgment-seat. The flesh is weak; but the willingness of the spirit shall refresh the weakness of the flesh. The number of the 'criers under the altar' must needs be fulfilled. If we be segregated thereunto, happy be we. This is the greatest promotion that God giveth in this world, to be such Philippians, 'to whom it is given not only to believe, but also to suffer,' etc.

"But who is able to do these things? Surely all our ability, all our sufficiency, is of God. He requireth and promiseth. Let us declare" [*i.e.*, manifest] "our obedience to His will, when it shall be requisite, in the time of trouble, yea, in the midst of the fire. When that number is fulfilled, which I ween shall be shortly, then have at the Papists, when they shall say, 'Peace, all things are safe,' when Christ shall come to keep His great parliament, to the redress of all things that be amiss. But He shall not come, as the Papists feign Him, to hide Himself, and to play bo-peep, as it were, under a piece of bread; but He shall come gloriously, to the terror and fear of all Papists, but to the great consolation and comfort of all that will here suffer for Him. 'Comfort yourselves with these words.'

"Lo! sir, here have I blotted your paper vainly, and played the fool

egregiously. But so I thought better than not to do your request at this time. Pardon me, and pray for me: pray for me, I say; pray for me, I say. For I am sometime so fearful, that I would creep into a mouse-hole; sometime God doth visit me again with His comfort. So He cometh and goeth, to teach me to feel and to know mine infirmity, to the intent to give thanks to Him that is worthy, lest I should rob Him of His duty, as many do. Fare you well."

Outside observers, who thought themselves shrewd judges of character, used to remark that "Latimer leaned to Cranmer, Cranmer leaned to Ridley, and Ridley leaned to his own singular wit;" but Ridley would have been the first to disclaim the honour thus ascribed to him. Latimer was unquestionably the most resolute of the three, and his courage was felt by the others as a source of moral strength. But all of them looked to the same Divine hand, as alone able to sustain them in the terrible trial that awaited them; and all were conscious of their own weakness and of the insufficiency of mere human wisdom to guide them aright in exposing the subtleties with which their adversaries sought to ensnare them, and seduce them from their integrity. The chief interest in these conferences lies in their revealing to us the holy and endearing friendship which subsisted between the three venerable martyrs. There is nowhere in history any instance of friendship more pleasing or touching than that which bound together in kindest sympathy, in mutual esteem, in noblest self-sacrifice, this triumvirate of England's bravest heroes. Further glimpses into their holy intimacy will be afforded us as the narrative proceeds.

Wyat's insurrection conferred an unexpected pleasure on the three friends. The Tower was so crowded with the unfortunate victims of that foolish rebellion, that Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, "as men not to be accounted of," were "put altogether in one prison." If it was designed as a mark of ignominy, it was received by the three as a

great blessing: "God be thanked," says Latimer, "it was to our great joy and comfort." To add to their satisfaction, John Bradford, the convert of Latimer, and bosom friend of Ridley, who had been for some time confined in the King's Bench prison, was removed to the Tower, and "thrust into the same chamber with them." There was probably no man in England whom the three Bishops would have more gladly admitted to share in their intercourse with each other; and the reader may well believe that the earnest prayers and loving pious intercourse of four such men would convert the gloomy Tower into a very porch of heaven. "We did together read over the New Testament," says Latimer, "with great deliberation and painful study," anxiously endeavouring to discover what Christ and the Apostles had taught on the subject of the Holy Communion; for this they knew would be the doctrine on which they would be required, either to conform their belief to the teaching of the Romish Church, or to defend their opinion with their lives. To such men, as to others, life was sweet; and while they hoped and prayed that God might strengthen them even for the terrors of the stake, they were not inclined rashly to sacrifice themselves for an opinion which they had not carefully and deliberately examined.

For two months, from the beginning of February till the end of March, the four pious friends enjoyed their intimate fellowship with each other, to their mutual comfort and joy. Preparations were in the meantime being made for a public disputation at Oxford, in which Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer were to be pitted against the chosen theological gladiators of the two universities, to the open disgrace and discomfiture, it was hoped, of the Protestant champions. On March 8, 1554, the Council sent a letter to the Lieut-

enant of the Tower, directing him to deliver to Sir John Williams "the bodies" [persons] "of the late Archbishop of Canterbury, Doctor Ridley, and Mr. Latimer, to be by him conveyed to Oxford."[1] Some few days later, "a little before Easter,"[2] which fell that year on March 25, they were suddenly conveyed to Windsor, and thence to Oxford, "and were suffered to have nothing with them but what they carried upon them." Not impossibly before bidding, what they must have believed to be a final farewell to Bradford, they may have joined in some solemn though furtive participation of the Holy Communion: just as some weeks before, "with a service-book, a manchet" [small loaf of fine bread], "and a glass of wine," Bradford had joined in the sacred rite with the jailor of his former prison, whom "he had begotten in his bonds."

Convocation, sitting under the presidency of Bonner (in the vacancy of the see of Canterbury), had appointed certain divines, of whom Weston was chief, to proceed to Oxford, and conduct the public disputation against Latimer and his companions; and Gardiner had drawn up the Articles on which the discussion was to be maintained. Cambridge and Oxford had selected their ablest theologians to assist in overthrowing the three great supporters of the Reformation; and Oxford was in a tumult of excitement. The three bishops were separated from each other, that there might be no communication on the matters to be debated. Ridley was sent to the house of Alderman Irish, where the ill-temper of the Alderman's wife rendered him very uncomfortable; Cranmer was immured in Bocardo, the common prison; and Latimer was lodged in the house of

[1] *Council Book*, Harleian MSS.: Foxe says March 10.

[2] So Ridley says (letter to Grindal): Foxe says "about the 10th of April," which was a fortnight after Easter.

one of the bailiffs. It was hoped, no doubt, that the defendants might, from want of mutual intercourse, contradict each other in their arguments; but, as we have seen, they had already spent some months in carefully discussing the questions likely to be submitted to them, and were therefore prepared with a well-chosen line of defence.

The disputation began on Saturday, April 14, with all the pomp of academic display. The "Mass of the Holy Ghost" was solemnly sung; then a brilliant procession was organised; the cross in the van, followed by the choristers, the regents, proctors, doctors of law, doctors of divinity; the greater dignitaries in the centre duly preceded by the beadles; and the mob of undergraduates bringing up the rear. The Commission met in the venerable St. Mary's Church, the thirty-three Commissioners occupying seats of state in front of the altar; the rest of the building being thronged with listeners, whom even the *religio loci* could not awe into decorous demeanour. Cranmer was first called, and answered with such modesty that some of the bystanders were affected even to tears. Ridley next appeared before them, and declining to assent to the Articles, a day was appointed on which he should publicly prove his objections to them.

"Last of all came in Master Latimer, with a kerchief and two or three caps on his head, his spectacles hanging by a string at his breast, and a staff in his hand, and was set in a chair; for so was he suffered by the prolocutor" [Weston]. "And after his denial of the Articles, when he had Wednesday appointed for disputation, he alleged age, sickness, disuse, and lack of books, saying that he was almost as meet to dispute as to be captain of Calais; but he would, he said, declare his mind either by writing or word, and would stand to all they could lay upon his back; complaining, moreover, that he was permitted to have neither pen nor ink, nor yet any book but only the New Testament there in his hand, which, he said, he had read over seven times deliberately, and yet could not find the mass

in it, neither the marrow-bones nor sinews of the same. At which words the Commissioners were not a little offended: and Dr. Weston said, that he would make him grant that it had both marrow-bones and sinews in the New Testament. To whom Master Latimer said again: 'That you will never do, Master Doctor;' and so forthwith they put him to silence; so that whereas he was desirous to tell what he meant by those terms, he could not be suffered. There was a very great press and throng of people, and one of the beadles swooned by reason thereof, and was carried into the vestry."

In the three days thus allowed him Latimer was of course busily occupied in preparing for his public disputation; and fearing the weakness of his memory, which age, and that "school of obliviousness," the Tower, had considerably impaired, he determined to avoid oral debate as much as possible, and to answer the articles in a written declaration. On Monday and Tuesday, Cranmer and Ridley were engaged before the Commissioners; and on Wednesday morning, at eight o'clock, Latimer appeared to answer to the Articles. In such a place, surrounded by men of learning and culture, it might have been expected that he would have been received with that courtesy which was due to his age and his reputation. But the scholars of Oxford, roused into rudeness and ferocity by the passions of the day, had forgotten that refinement which learning is supposed to communicate. Not a single member of the University, Ridley complains,[1] had offered to any of the venerable prelates any manner of favour. To the disgrace of Oxford, Latimer was received with bitter taunts, and his defence was interrupted with hissings and scornful laughings.

The Articles on which he was required to declare his belief had been skilfully selected by Gardiner, and related to the three great Romish tenets on the mass. They were as follows:—

[1] *Letters*, p. 364.

"1. In the sacrament of the altar, by the virtue of God's word pronounced by the priest, there is *really* present the natural body of Christ, conceived of the Virgin Mary, under the kinds of the appearance of bread and wine; in like manner His blood." [*The doctrine of the real presence.*]

"2. After the consecration there remaineth no substance of bread and wine, nor any other substance, but the substance of God and man." [*Transubstantiation.*]

"3. In the mass there is the lively sacrifice of the Church, which is propitiatory as well for the sins of the quick as of the dead" [*Sacrifice of the mass*].

To these conclusions Latimer briefly replied:—

"1. Concerning the first conclusion, methinketh it is set forth with certain new-found terms that be obscure, and do not sound according to the Scripture. Howbeit, so far as I understand it, thus do I answer, plainly, though not without peril of my life. I answer that for the right celebration of the Lord's Supper, there is none other presence of Christ required than a spiritual presence; and this presence is sufficient for a Christian man, as the presence by which we abide in Christ, and Christ abideth in us, to the obtaining of eternal life, if we persevere therein. And this same presence may most suitably be called a real presence, for it is a presence not feigned but true and faithful. And this I here rehearse lest some sycophant or scorner should suppose me, with the Anabaptists, to make nothing else of the sacrament but a bare and naked sign. But as for that which is feigned of many concerning the *corporal* presence, I, for my part, take it but for a Papistical invention; and therefore I think it is utterly to be rejected.

"2. Concerning the second conclusion, I dare be bold to say, that it hath no stay or ground in God's Holy Word, but is a thing invented by man, and therefore to be reputed and had as false; and I had almost said, as the mother and nurse of all other errors: and my lords the transubstantiators seem to be involved in the heresy of the Nestorians.

"3. The third conclusion, as far as I understand it, seemeth subtilly to sow sedition against the offering which Christ Himself offered for us in His own person, according to that pithy place of the Hebrews which saith, 'Christ having his own self made purgation of our sins:' and a little after, 'that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest concerning those things which are to be done with

God, for the taking away of our sins.' So that the expiation of men's sins may be thought rather to depend on this, that Christ was the offering priest, than that He was offered, were it not that He was offered of Himself: and therefore it is needless that He should be offered of any other. I will speak nothing of the wonderful presumption of man, to dare to attempt this thing without a manifest vocation, specially in that it tendeth to the overthrowing and making fruitless (if not wholly, yet partly) of the cross of Christ. For truly it is no base or mean thing to offer Christ; and therefore worthily a man may say to my lords and masters the officers, By what authority do ye this, and who gave ye this authority? Where? When? 'A man cannot,' saith the Baptist, 'take anything except it be given him from above;' much less then may any man presume to usurp any honour before he be thereto called.

"What meaneth Paul when he saith, 'They that serve at the altar are partakers of the altar,' and then he addeth, 'so the Lord hath ordained that they that preach the gospel shall live of the gospel?' Whereas he should have said, The Lord hath ordained that they that sacrifice at mass should live of their sacrificing."

After citing some similar passages, he proceeded to complain of the treatment he had received on his previous appearance before the Commissioners.

"I have spoken in my time before two Kings more than once, two or three hours together, without interruption; but now, that I may speak the truth (by your leave), I could not be suffered to declare my mind before you, no not by the space of a quarter of an hour, without snatches, revilings, checks, rebukes, taunts, such as I have not felt the like in such an audience all my life long. Surely it cannot but be a heinous offence that I have given. But what was it? Forsooth I had spoken of the four marrow-bones of the mass; the which kind of speaking I never read to be a sin against the Holy Ghost. I could not be allowed to show what I meant by my metaphor; but, sir, now, by your favour, I will tell your mastership what I meant. The first is 'the Popish Consecration,' which hath been called a God's-body-making: the second is 'Transubstantiation:' the third is 'the Missal Oblation:' the fourth, 'Adoration:' these chief and principal portions, parts, and points, belonging or incident to the mass, and most esteemed and had in price in the same, I call 'the marrow-bones of the mass.'"

These main points of the mass, he repeated, he had never discovered in Scripture: he had read the New Testament over seven times with great deliberation; he had studied it with men of such eminent learning as Cranmer, Ridley, and Bradford, when they were together in the Tower, and they could find no other presence of Christ's body and blood in the New Testament than a spiritual presence; nor did Scripture say that the mass was a sacrifice for sins, but rather that the sacrifice "which Christ did on the cross was perfect, holy, and good; that God did require none other; nor that never again to be done, but was pacified with that only omnisufficient and most painful sacrifice of that sweet slain Lamb for our sins."

He concluded in words of solemn earnestness: "Thus have I answered your conclusions, as I will stand unto, with God's help, to the fire. And after this, I am able to declare to the majesty of God, by His invaluable Word, that I die for the truth; for I assure you if I could grant to the Queen's proceedings, and endure by the Word of God, I would rather live than die; but seeing they be directly against God's Word, I will obey God more than man, and so embrace the stake."[1]

Latimer had with great labour written out his answers to the Articles, in order to save himself the fatigue and annoyance of oral disputation, which might be too much for his feeble health and impaired memory. He was not, however, allowed to escape; his very weakness probably induced his opponents to attack him in the hope of achieving a signal victory. But their anticipations of triumph were doomed to disappointment. Latimer was driven, by the

[1] There are several widely different copies of this document. The above is in the main taken from Foxe, compared for the first time with the official account of the disputation, compiled by William White, of Merton College, preserved in the Harleian MSS., 3642.

weakness of his memory, to abandon those citations from the Fathers which were too much relied on in the Protestant defence, and to confirm his doctrines by a simple appeal to what was the real strength of the Reformed creed, the Word of God. It would only fatigue a modern reader to give the whole of the disputation, but a specimen of the "baiting" (well so called) to which Latimer was subjected, and of his defence, will not be unacceptable. After some preliminary fencing on minor matters, Smith, one of those appointed to oppose Latimer, and whose singular lecture at Oxford we noticed, some sixteen years before, recalled the debate to the real question at issue.

"*Smith.*—'I ask whether Christ's body be really in the sacrament?"

"*Latimer.*—'I trust I have obtained of Mr. Prolocutor that no man shall exact that thing of me which is not in me' [an oral discussion]. 'And I am sorry that this worshipful audience should be deceived of their expectation for my sake. I have given up my mind in writing to Mr. Prolocutor.'

"*Smith.*—'Whatsoever ye have given up, it shall be registered among the acts' [the official account of the discussion].

"*Latimer.*—'Disputation requireth a good memory; but my memory is gone clean, and marvellously weakened, and never the better, I wis, for the prison.'

"*Weston* (the prolocutor).—'How long have ye been in prison?'

"*Latimer.*—'These three quarters of this year' [not quite, only seven months].

"*Weston.*—'And I was in prison six years.'

"*Latimer.*—'The more pity, sir.'

"*Weston.*—'How long have you been of this opinion?'

"*Latimer.*—'It is not long, sir, that I have been of this opinion.'

"*Weston.*—'The time hath been when you said mass full devoutly.'

"*Latimer.*—'Yea, I cry God mercy heartily for it.'

"*Weston.*—'Where learned you this newfangleness?'

"*Latimer.*—'I have long sought for the truth in this matter of the sacrament, and have not been of this mind past seven years; and my lord of Canterbury's book" [Cranmer's answer to Gardiner] "hath especially confirmed my judgment herein. If I could remember all

therein contained, I would not fear to answer any man in this matter.'

"*Tresham.*—'There are in that book six hundred errors.'

"*Weston.*—'You were once a Lutheran.'

"*Latimer.*—'No. I was a Papist; I never could perceive how Luther could defend his opinion without transubstantiation. The Tigurines" [divines of Zurich] "once did write a book against Luther, and I oft desired God that he might live so long to make them answer.'

"*Weston.*—'Luther, in his book on the Private Mass, said that the devil reasoned with him, and persuaded him that the mass was not good; whereof it may appear that Luther said mass, and the devil dissuaded him from it.'

"*Latimer.*—'I do not take in hand here to defend Luther's sayings or doings. If he were here, he would defend himself well enough, I trow. I told you before that I am not meet for disputations. I pray you read mine answer, wherein I have declared my faith.'"

Notwithstanding that Latimer thus again and again declined to dispute, his opponents went on to involve him in abstruse discussions about the exact interpretation of the famous words of St. John's Gospel, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye shall have no life in you;" and, according to their custom, they alleged against him the mystical words of some of the Fathers. Latimer did not profess to explain all that the Fathers had written: "If they had foreseen," he replied, in the words of Melanchthon, "that they should have been so taken in this controversy, they would have written more plainly." It was in vain they cited against him Cyril, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Augustine; he was not to be moved from the impregnable position which he had taken up, to believe nothing on the nature of the presence of Christ in the communion, except what was plainly laid down in Scripture.

"'Augustine,' he answered, 'was a reasonable man; he requireth to be believed no farther than he bringeth Scripture for his proof,

and agreeth with God's Word: the doctors might be deceived in some points, though not in all things. I believe them when they say well.'

"*Cole.*—'Is it not a shame for an old man to lie? You say you are of the old Fathers' faith when they say well, and yet ye are not.'

"*Latimer.*—'I *am* of their faith when they say well. I refer myself to my lord of Canterbury's book wholly herein.'

"*Smith.*—'Then are you not of Chrysostom's faith, nor of St. Augustine's faith.'

"*Latimer.*—'I have said, when they say well, and bring Scripture for them, I *am* of their faith; and further Augustine requireth not to be believed.'"

Seeing they could make no impression on a disputant who entrenched himself behind such an impregnable position, they terminated the argument by an appeal to Latimer's fears.

"*Weston.*—'Your stubbornness cometh of a vainglory, which is to no purpose; for it will do you no good when a fagot is in your beard. And we see all by your own confession how little cause you have to be stubborn, for your learning is in feoffer's hold' [*i.e.*, it was all in Cranmer's book]. 'The Queen's grace is merciful, if ye will turn.'

"*Latimer.*—'You shall have no hope in me to turn. I pray for the Queen daily, even from the bottom of my heart, that she may turn from this religion.'

"*Weston.*—'Here you all see the weakness of heresy against the truth: he denieth all truth and all the old Fathers.'"

With this flourish of trumpets on the part of Weston, Latimer's disputation closed, having lasted from eight till nearly eleven o'clock. The audience had treated Latimer as they had treated Ridley, who complains that he "could never have thought it possible to find within England any persons of knowledge and learning so brazen-faced and so shameless."[1] They railed, and raged, and laughed, and hissed; and poor Latimer, who was faint, and so infirm that he "durst not drink for fear of vomiting," would leave the

[1] Ridley's account of the disputation at Oxford.

divinity-schools sick at heart from the melancholy spectacle which he had witnessed.

On the Friday following this disputation, the Commissioners sat again in state in St. Mary's Church, and the three bishops were brought before them. The prolocutor addressed them on the dangers to which they exposed themselves by adhering to what he called their vain heretical opinions, and intreated them to submit to the teaching of the Church. They were not allowed to make any reply to his address beyond simply stating whether or not they were willing to subscribe to the Articles which had been proposed. Latimer and the others replied that they were resolved to abide by what they had said in their disputations. Sentence was then formally pronounced upon them: they were declared to be no members of the Church, and were condemned as heretics. While the sentence was being read, they were once again asked whether they would turn or not; but they bade the prolocutor read on, in the name of God, for they were resolved not to abandon their faith. After the sentence had been pronounced, Latimer added, "I thank God most heartily, that He hath prolonged my life to this end, that I may in this case glorify God by that kind of death;" to which the prolocutor replied, "If *you* go to heaven in this faith, then *I* will never come thither, as I am thus persuaded."

The proceedings of the disputation were terminated the next day, April 21, with another mass and a grand procession. Cranmer was compelled to look at the procession from his prison, Ridley from his place of confinement, and Latimer from the bailiff's house. Latimer, indeed, imagined that the hour of his martyrdom was come when he was thus summoned to witness the procession in honour of those doctrines which he had so earnestly opposed; and

when he knew the real state of the case, he turned away, and would not even pollute his eyes with the sight.[1] Weston returned to London on the Monday following, and on the Friday, the Commissioners appeared in convocation, and presented their report of their proceedings in the examination of Latimer and his companions.[2] The punishment of heresy was, of course, death at the stake; but to have carried the sentence into execution at that time would have been to recognise, in part, the legislation of Henry VIII.; it was resolved therefore to delay until the judges and the Council should fully consider the matter. On May 3, the Council ordered "that the Mayor of Oxford should bring in his bill of allowance for the charges of Doctor Cranmer, Doctor Ridley, and Mr. Latimer, and should have a warrant for the same; and further it was resolved by their lordships that the judges and the Queen's Highness's Counsel learned should be called together, and their opinions demanded what they think in law her highness may do touching the causes of the said Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer."[3] As the result of the deliberations of this learned assemblage of lawyers, the martyrdom of the three condemned heretics was deferred till further arrangements with the Papal See were completed; and thus another season of rest and calm preparation was granted them; for nearly eighteen months elapsed before Latimer and Ridley were martyred.

We are so accustomed to speak of Latimer as a martyr who bravely perished at the stake, that we almost forget that he was a man, and that to him, as to ordinary mortals, life was sweet, and death, especially the painful death of the martyr, bitter and dreadful. It was from no vain-

[1] Foxe, vi. 534. [2] Wilkins' *Concilia*, iv. 94.
[3] *Council Book*, Harleian MSS., 643.

glorious love of fame that he cast away his life: that emotion may sustain the warrior in the tumult of the battle-field, but it will seldom brave the horrors of the stake. Latimer had repeatedly protested that a man should not sacrifice his life except for a worthy cause; and he had enjoyed abundance of leisure for calmly weighing the merits of the present cause, and deciding upon the line of conduct which it was his duty to follow. And he was right in deciding that here, on this question of the real presence in the sacrament, was, if anywhere, in the controversy between the two Churches, the proper ground for resistance even at the risk of life. For this doctrine was the true heart and citadel of the whole Romish system; all the other abuses of the Church of Rome, the pretensions of the priesthood, the claims of infallibility, the elevation of tradition and the Church above Scripture—these were mere outposts, which would, in the course of time, fall of themselves if this sacramental citadel were once stormed. Although, therefore, he was unable to explain all that the early Fathers had written, in somewhat flowery style, on the subject; although he felt that even in Scripture there were words from which ingenious logicians might deduce strange perplexing subtilties; although he himself used language which has been through ignorance or dishonesty represented as equivalent to the teaching of the Romish Church; Latimer knew that on this point the difference between his belief and theirs was absolute and irreconcilable, and that it was not a mere metaphysical subtilty, but a grand comprehensive truth, involving in more or less direct consequence, all the important differences that divided the Church of Rome from the Church of the Reformation. The three martyrs, men of consummate learning and acuteness, who had long passed the age of

heedless enthusiasm, were not in the least likely to throw away their lives (as some modern divines seem so wildly to imagine) for a mere impalpable distinction without a difference. If it had been possible for them to subscribe the Articles with a good conscience, they would have submitted: they died as martyrs in protest against any attempt to force upon the Church of England that dogma of the real presence in the sacrament, which is the fundamental principle of the Church of Rome.

Of Latimer's occupation during the eighteen months that intervened between this first condemnation and his martyrdom, no detailed account can be given. He probably spent most of his time in prayer, for he was too feeble in health to be able for the labours of correspondence.

"In prayer," says Foxe, following Bernher, "he was fervently occupied, wherein oftentimes so long he continued kneeling, that he was not able to rise without help; and amongst other things, these were three principal matters he prayed for. First, that as God had appointed him to be a preacher of His Word, so also He would give him grace to stand to his doctrine unto his death, that he might give his heart-blood for the same. Secondly, that God of His mercy would restore His Gospel to England once again; and these words, 'once again,' 'once again,' he did so inculcate and beat into the ears of the Lord God, as though he had seen God before him, and spoken to Him face to face. The third principal matter wherewith in his prayers he was occupied, was to pray for the preservation of the Queen's Majesty that now is" [Queen Elizabeth], "whom in his prayer accustomably he was wont to name, and even with tears desired God to make her a comfort to this comfortless realm of England. These were the matters he prayed for so earnestly; but were these things desired in vain? Did God despise the prayers of this His faithful soldier? No, assuredly; for the Lord did most graciously grant all these requests."

In Latimer's silence we must be content to glean a few scanty but interesting pieces of information from

some of the letters of Ridley, who as the youngest of the three was naturally more diligent in maintaining correspondence, when possible, with the world outside the prison walls. The glimpses which Ridley gives us into Latimer's prison life at Oxford are few and at long intervals, for indeed Ridley's letters were written surreptitiously, and many of them were, in all probability, intercepted; still they are real, and therefore of more value than any modern conjectures. We shall allow Ridley to speak for himself, merely endeavouring, as far as possible, to arrange the extracts from his letters in exact chronological sequence.

The first extract may be referred to the beginning of April, 1554: it describes their arrival at Oxford, and their treatment previous to their examination before the Commissioners.[1]

"We are in good health, thanks be to God, and yet the manner of our treatment doth change as sour ale doth in summer. It is reported to us of our keepers" [they were then in the Bocardo, the common prison of Oxford], "that the University beareth us heavily" [has an ill-will to us]. "A coal chanced to fall in the night out of the chimney, and burnt a hole in the floor, and no more harm was done, the bailiff's servants sitting by the fire. Another night there chanced a drunken fellow to multiply words, and for the same he was set in Bocardo. Upon these things, as is reported, there is risen a rumour in the town and country about, that we would have broken the prison with such violence as, if the bailiffs had not played the pretty men, we should have made an escape. We had out of our prison a wall that we might have walked upon" [were allowed to do so]; "and our servants" [Latimer's faithful Austin was still with him] "had liberty to go abroad in the town or fields; but now both they and we are

[1] *Ridley's Works* (Parker Society), p. 359. It is to be regretted that no effort whatever has been made by the editor to assign the letters to any date, or to arrange them in any order. The letters, in fact, are not edited; they are merely (as Carlyle says) tilted up like rubbish from a cart.

restrained of both. The Bishop of Worcester" [Heath, restored *vice* Hooper deposed] "passed by us through Oxford, but he did not visit us. The same day began our restraint to be more, and the book of the Communion" [Prayer Book] "was taken from us by the bailiffs at the mayor's commandment. No man is licensed to come unto us. Afore, they that would, might see us upon the wall; but this is so grudged at, and so evil reported, that we are now restrained.

"Sir" [he is writing to Bradford], "blessed be God, with all our evil reports, grudgings, and restraints, we are merry in God; and all our care is, and shall be, by God's grace, to please and serve Him, of whom we look and hope, after this temporal and momentary misery, to have eternal joy and perpetual felicity with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Peter and Paul, and all the blessed company of the angels in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. As yet there is never learned man or any scholar or other, that visited us since we came into Bocardo, which now in Oxford may be called a *college of quondams*" [persons deposed from office]; "for, as you know, we be no fewer here than three, and I dare say, every one well contented with his position, which I do reckon to be our heavenly Father's gracious and fatherly good gift.

"We *all* pray you, as you can, to cause all our commendations to be made to all such as you know did visit us and you when we were in the Tower, with their kindly remembrances and benefits. Mistress Wilkinson and Mistress Warcup have not forgotten us, but even since we came into Bocardo, with their charitable and friendly benevolence have comforted us; not that else we lack (for God be blessed, which ever hitherto hath provided sufficiently for us), but it is a great comfort and an occasion for us to bless God, when we see that He maketh them so friendly to tender us, whom some of us were never familiarly acquainted withal."

One reads with pleasure of the kindly sympathy which prompted these pious ladies, at no small risk to themselves, to contribute to the support of the illustrious prisoners. Almost the only letter which Latimer wrote at this time was a brief letter of grateful thanks to Mistress Wilkinson for her kindness to him. This good lady was a widow, who resided usually at Soper Lane,

in London, but was at this time living at the manor of English, in Oxfordshire.[1]

"If the gift of a pot of water shall not be in oblivion with God, how can God forget your manifold and bountiful gifts, when He shall say unto you, 'I was in prison and you visited me?' God grant us all to do and suffer while we be here as may be His will and pleasure. Amen. Yours in Bocardo, Hugh Latimer."

Till the commencement of the disputation the three were all imprisoned in Bocardo; a change was, however, subsequently made, which Ridley thus briefly describes in his letter to Grindal, in 1555.

"About Whitsuntide last year" [rather earlier] "was our disputation at Oxford; after the which was all taken from us, as pen and ink, etc.; our own servants were taken from us before, and every one had put to him a strange man; and we each one appointed to be kept in several" [separate] "places, as we are unto this day."[2]

These rigorous proceedings were not in reality productive of so much inconvenience as was intended; for the servants, appointed probably as spies upon them, soon learned to sympathise with the prisoners, and not only connived at their maintenance of intercourse with each other, but actually assisted them in what must have been to them all a source of deepest consolation. "My man," says Ridley in a letter to Cranmer, "is trusty; but it grieveth both him and me, that when I send him with anything to you, your man will not let him come up to see you, as he may to Master Latimer, and yours to me."

Latimer's faithful Swiss servant, Augustine Bernher, was overwhelmed with grief at being separated from his master. He, indeed, seems to have himself fallen

[1] Bradford writes to her, and also to Mistress Ann Warcup.

[2] The date is ascertained as June 1, 1555, by the reference to Cardmaker's martyrdom as having occurred the previous day.

under the suspicion of the authorities; and he was utterly at a loss to know whether he should remain still at Oxford, in the hope of again being permitted to join his master, or should consult for his own safety by flight. He asked the advice of Latimer's friends, the Glovers; and Robert Glover, in a long and somewhat hesitating letter, recommended him to remain at Oxford, and trust in the mercy and goodness of God to order all things aright. Glover's letter [1] also speaks of the kindness of friends who considered it an honour to provide for the wants of the faithful prisoners at Oxford. Besides sending Bernher "two shirts for himself, and two for his master," he sent by the same bearer "six pounds, thirteen shillings, and fourpence, left by an honest gentleman to provide such things as your master and his two fellow-prisoners do lack."

All over England the deepest sympathy was felt for men who so nobly sacrificed themselves for conscience' sake; and from all sides proofs of these feelings came with grateful frequency to Oxford.

"With us," writes Ridley again, "all things are here common; meat, money, and whatsoever one of us hath, that can or may do another good. Although the bailiffs and our hosts straitly watch us, that we have no conference or intelligence of anything abroad, yet hath God provided for every one of us, in the stead of our servants, faithful fellows which will be content to hear, and see, and to do for us whatsoever they can. . . . As far as London is from Oxford, yet thence we have received of late both meat, money, and shirts; not only from such as are of our acquaintance, but of some with whom I had never to my knowledge any acquaintance. I know for whose sake they do it; to Him, therefore, be all honour, glory, and due thanks. And yet, I pray you, do so much as to show them that we have received their benevolence, and (God be blessed) have plenty of all such things.

[1] British Museum: Additional MSS., 19400, No. 38; never printed.

Mr. Latimer was crazed, but I hear now, thanks be to God, that he amendeth again." [1]

The calamity here referred to as having happened to Latimer was, it may be believed, not in reality so dreadful as it appears to a modern reader: *to be crazed*, in the language of Ridley's day, meant to be seriously ill in health, utterly *shattered* and broken down, as the derivation of the word implies, and did not of necessity involve any mental derangement; though after the worry and excitement of the past weeks in which, as Latimer too well knew, he had taken up a position that would cost him his life, it would not be surprising that both mind and body, for a time, should have given way.

It must not be inferred from the allusions made in these letters to the benevolence of Christian ladies, that no provision whatever was made for the necessary wants of the three prisoners, and that they were entirely dependent upon the sympathy of charitable admirers. On the contrary, they "had food and clothing at the royal charge," as Ridley subsequently informed Bradford *(victum et amictum e penario regio)*. The Council took the matter into their consideration, and they resolved "that the Mayor and bailiffs of Oxford should have for the charges due unto them for Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, and their servants, three pounds every week," and they authorised the treasurer to pay at that rate for so much as was due.[2] This, considering the value of money, was a handsome allowance for their support; but,

[1] Ridley's Letters, xiii., to Bradford: the date is fixed to April, 1554, from the fact that it is a reply to a letter from Bradford, asking advice about answering in a public disputation; Ridley recommends not to answer; and May 1, 1554, Bradford and others issued a protest against any public disputation.

[2] *Council Book*, Harleian MSS.

unfortunately for the credit of Mary's government, the mayor and bailiffs were never repaid their outlay. They presented a bill of sixty-three pounds for their expenditure, but only twenty pounds of this sum was paid to them; and eleven years later they had to petition Archbishop Parker to contribute towards defraying the expense of supporting his predecessor in Bocardo. A curious record is preserved of their diet in Oxford, specifying every article supplied to them for dinner and supper, with its exact cost; one of the most singular specimens of a diary in existence. The following, is for example, the "bill for the dinner of October 1." [1]

Bread and ale	ii d.
Item, oysters	i d.
Item, butter	ii d.
Item, eggs	ii d.
Item, lyng	viii d.
Item, a piece of fresh salmon	x d.
Wine	iii d.
Cheese and peais	ii d.
Total	ii s. vi d.

They had suppers as well as dinners: but in both cases the same quantity of wine was supplied, and both meals invariably terminated with cheese and pears. It may interest those to whom such details seem of value to know that it was a year of great scarcity, and that the prices given above were esteemed extraordinarily dear. Strype believes that they were occasionally allowed to dine together in Bocardo, of course under strict surveillance to prevent them conversing with each other; but this seems highly improbable, when such precaution had been taken to keep them always apart.

[1] Strype's *Cranmer*, vol. i., p. 562.

The resolution of the authorities to prevent them holding any intercourse with each other, or learning the condition of affairs in England, had, as we have seen, been defeated by the attachment of the servants who waited on the venerable fathers. Their noble constancy had raised them higher than ever in the esteem of all who were in any way attached to the Reformation; it was, in fact, the source of the renewed life of the Reformation in England. Had Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer yielded, or faltered in their courage; had they abandoned their posts, and sought safety in flight, as their friends had entreated them to do, and as so many of the noisy "gospellers" who used to upbraid them with cowardice had already done; in all probability the cause of the Reformation in England would have been desperate. But their inflexible courage had inspired new energy into every Reformer; and from all quarters there came, by trusty messengers, letters of grateful admiration to the three "condemned heretics" of Oxford. Thus also the three bishops were again reinstated in the position from which they had somewhat fallen, of the recognised leaders and advisers of all the English Reformers. They were consulted about every matter of consequence. Bradford and Hooper and their fellow-prisoners, for example, asked their advice as to whether they should take any share in a public disputation conducted as that at Oxford had been, or should refrain.[1] Ridley's answer is preserved; he alone probably wrote a reply, but the question was carefully submitted to them all. A troublesome party also had sprung up among the Reformers, teaching doctrines on the subject of free will, which were deemed heretical and dangerous; and again the three prelates were anxiously entreated to advise what was most fitting to be done. So

[1] See the letter in Foxe, vol. vi.

that though deprived of outward rank and all the pomp of hierarchical pre-eminence, they were still as much as ever, more indeed than they had been during the closing years of Edward's reign, the leaders of the English Reformation, to whom their followers looked up for guidance, and for a noble example of Christian constancy. Through thousands of English hearts there passed the same sentiments that Rowland Taylor, also a prisoner for Christ's sake, expressed so well in a letter sent to Oxford, shortly after the disputation.

"England hath had but a few learned bishops that would stick to Christ even unto the fire. . . . . I cannot utter with pen how I rejoice in my heart for you three such captains in the forward, under Christ's cross, banner, or standard, in such a cause and skirmish; when not only one or two of our dear Redeemer's strongholds are besieged, but all his chief castles, ordained for our safeguard, are traitorously impugned. This your enterprise, in the sight of all that be in heaven, and of all God's people in earth, is most pleasant to behold. This is another manner of nobility, than to be in the forefront in worldly warfares."[1]

Of course in such times of danger there were many who loved the cause of the Reformation, and who had remained stedfast even to imprisonment, but who shrank from the fiery ordeal to which it now seemed probable they might be submitted, and who began to doubt whether, without sin, they might not purchase for themselves deliverance and freedom, by some sacrifice of their faith or a liberal use of their money. One of these prisoners wrote to consult Latimer on this case of conscience; and the reply of the venerable Reformer was, as might have been anticipated, that Christ must be held dearer even than life itself. Latimer's answer, written from his Oxford prison, reflects the character of his prison studies: it contains no quotations

[1] Strype's *Cranmer*, p. 486.

from the Fathers, but abundant references to that great source of his strength which he so deliberately perused—the New Testament. A few sentences will convince the reader that the good old prelate had quite recovered the full use of his intellect, if he ever had been "crazed," in the modern sense of that term.

"Christ saith that 'Foxes have their holes and the birds of the air have their nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.' The wise men of this world can find shifts to avoid the cross; and the unstable in faith can set themselves to rest with the world; but the simple servant of Christ doth look for no other but oppression in the world. And then is it their most glory, when they be under the cross of their master, Christ, which He did bear, not only for our redemption, but also for an example to us, that we should follow His steps in suffering, that we might be partakers of His glorious resurrection. I do therefore allow highly your judgment in this behalf, who think it not lawful for money to redeem yourself out of the cross; unless you would go about to exchange glory for shame, and to sell your inheritance for a mess of pottage, as Esau did, who afterwards found it no more."

After fortifying this position by many citations from the New Testament, he proceeds :—

"But, perchance the worldly-wise man, or carnal gospeller, will confess, and object this to be true, and that he intendeth not to deny the truth, although he buy himself out of the yoke of the cross; minding hereafter, if he be driven thereto, to die therein. But to him I answer, with Solomon, 'Defer not to do well till to-morrow, but do it out of hand, if thou have liberty.' So I say, that little we know whether God will give us such grace, as he doth now offer us, at another time, viz., to suffer for His sake; and it is not in us to choose it when we will. Therefore let us offer the counsel of St. Paul, 'serve the time' (which we are in) of affliction, and be glad to be afflicted with the people of God, which is the recognisance of the children of God; and rather to 'redeem the time,' with our death for the testimony of the truth, to the which we are born, than to purchase a miserable life for the concupiscence of the world, and to the great danger of falling from God. We are now more near to God than ever we were, yea, we are at the gate of heaven; and

we are a joyful spectacle become, in this our captivity, to God, to the angels, and to all His saints, who look that we should end our course with glory. We have found the precious stone of the Gospel, for the which we ought to sell all that we have in the world. And shall we exchange, or lay to gage the precious treasure which we have in our hands for a few days to lament in the world, contrary to our vocation? God forbid it! But let us, as Christ willeth us in St. Luke, 'look up, and lift up our heads, for our redemption is at hand.'

"A man that hath long travelled, and hath his journey's end before him, what madness were it for him to set further compass about, and put himself in more trouble and labour than needeth! If we live by hope, let us desire the end and fruition of our hope.

"If any man perceive his faith not to abide the fire, let such an one with weeping buy his liberty, until he hath obtained more strength; lest the Gospel by him sustain an offence of some shameful recantation. Let the dead bury the dead. Let us that be of the lively faith follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth."

Such words of stedfast faith must have inspired with fresh courage all who heard them. Well might Ridley, writing from his prison, say, "I do think the Lord hath placed old father Latimer to be His standard bearer in our age and country against his mortal foe, anti-christ."[1] One only regrets that Latimer was unable to impart a larger share of his faith and courage to his venerable fellow-prisoner Cranmer, who, by his weakness in the hour of danger, has left an unhappy stain on the close of a long and useful and honoured career.

From the extracts now given the reader will be able to collect no inadequate idea of the manner in which Latimer's prison-life at Oxford flowed on. Favoured with abundance of leisure for prayer, for meditation, for the calm perusal of the New Testament; not altogether cut off from intercourse with his fellow-prisoners; receiving every day tokens of the kindly esteem of many admirers known

[1] Ridley's letter to Mrs. Glover.

and unknown; honoured and consulted by all who loved the Reformation in England; Latimer may have looked upon his imprisonment as by no means the most unhappy period of his chequered life. The one fear which would have made his imprisonment intolerable, had been taken away; his soul was stayed upon God, and he looked upon death, even the martyr's death, without alarm. Meantime the progress of events under the rule of Mary was gradually maturing measures for commencing that active persecution which has rendered her name for ever infamous. Cardinal Pole had at length arrived in England, and had solemnly absolved the nation from all their heresies, and assured them of the forgiveness of the Papal See. This was done on November 30, 1554, St. Andrew's Day, which, it was ordered, was to be observed for ever after as the *Feast of Reconciliation*. In the same fond exultation over their short-lived triumph, they had a grand procession on January 25, 1555, the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, and in the evening "commandment was given to make bonfires through all London, for joy of the people that were converted like as Saint Paul was converted." [1] The authority of the Pope being now formally restored, Cardinal Pole granted a commission to the bishops to proceed in the trial of the heretics then in prison, and to judge them according to the rigour of the old penal laws which Parliament had revived; and now the Protestants knew that their supreme hour of trial had come. Rogers led the way as the proto-martyr in this fierce persecution. Hooper soon followed; and the eyes of Englishmen became familiar with the most dreadful of all sights, men of learning and piety dying a cruel death for the sake of their faith.

[1] *Greyfriars' Chronicle.*

It was some months before any active steps were taken against Latimer and his fellow-prisoners at Oxford; but, notwithstanding all precautions to keep them uninformed as to the position of public affairs, they knew well that the hour of which they had so often thought and prayed was at hand. What their emotions were at such a moment, Ridley has told us in one of his letters to Bradford.

"We all here be (thanks be to God) in good health and comfort, watching with our lamps alight (I trust in God), when it shall please our Master, the bridegroom, to call us to wait upon him unto the marriage. Now we suppose the day doth approach apace, for we hear that the Parliament is dissolved" [was dissolved January 16, 1555]. "The burgesses of Oxford are come home, and other news we hear not, but that the King" [Philip] "is made protector to the prince to be born," [expected to be born, but never born]; "and that the bishops have full authority, *ex officio*, to inquire of heresies. Before the Parliament began, it was a rumour here, that certain from the Convocation-house were appointed, yea, ready to have come to Oxford, and then there was spied out one thing to lack, for want of a law to perform their intent. Now, seeing they can want no law" [Parliament having again called into force the old laws], "we cannot but look for them shortly. I trust to God's glory, let them come when they will."

Some kind friends, it would appear, had again sent the three prisoners clothes; and Ridley thus beautifully alludes to this act of respect and charity:—

"I am sure you have heard of our new apparel, and I doubt not but London will have their talk of it. Sir, know you that although this seemeth to us in our case much thanks-worthy, yet have we not that apparel that we look for, for this in time will wear; but that which we look for, rightly done" [put] "on, will endure, and is called *stola immortalitatis*, the robe of immortality."[1]

When the persecution had actually begun, the most strange and exaggerated rumours were conveyed to Oxford

[1] Ridley's *Letters*, p. 371.

of what had occurred, and what was contemplated in their own case. Ridley was told by his hostess that Hooper had been hanged, drawn, and quartered, for treason. On another occasion it was rumoured that all the three Oxford prisoners were to be "shortly and suddenly conveyed into three several colleges, for what purpose, and how to be ordered, no one could tell." As they at length received unquestionable information of the progress of the persecution, and learned the steadfast faith and courage which had kept Rogers unflinching at the stake, they looked on their own death as near, and were comforted by the recollection of his constancy.

"We look now every day," says Ridley, whom we may consider the interpreter of the others, "when we shall be called on, blessed be God! I ween, I am the weakest many ways, of our company; and yet I thank our Lord God and heavenly Father by Christ, that since I heard of our dear brother Rogers' departing" [burnt February 4, 1555], "and stout confession of Christ and His truth even unto the death, my heart (blessed be God!) so rejoiced of it, that since that time, I say, I never felt any lumpish heaviness in my heart, as I grant I have felt some times before."[1]

As the year went on, the rigour of Latimer's imprisonment was somewhat increased; it was no longer easy for the three prisoners to hold intercourse with each other, and they were so strictly watched that their servants could with difficulty do anything for them.[2]

Nothing, however, could entirely defeat the ingenuity of Latimer's faithful servant Bernher, who, in accordance with Glover's advice, and in spite of all the strict watch that was kept, contrived to keep up communication with his old master and his fellow-prisoners, and was able to transmit to them intelligence of what was occurring in

[1] Ridley's *Letters*, p. 378.
[2] Ridley's *Letters*, p. 379.

England, and occasional tokens of the good-will of some faithful and devoted admirers. He was, in fact, the only medium of intercourse now left between them and the external world. To him we owe the preservation of Ridley's prison writings, and but for him we should doubtless have lost those letters of Ridley and Latimer which prevent their prison life at Oxford being an entire blank in history. Ridley regarded this humble, faithful Swiss, "as appointed by God to do much pleasure for his prest" [zealous] "servants to his wars;" and the reader of English history and the admirer of English worth, will not grudge a tribute of grateful respect to one whose devotion has preserved for us documents of no slight historical value.

In the month of May[1] Latimer wrote an epistle "to all the unfeigned lovers of God's truth." It was his last address to the people of England, whom he had so often instructed, and is full of comfort and earnest warning. None of the farewell letters of the martyrs better deserves a careful perusal: only a few specimens of its character, however, can here be given.

"Brethren, the time is come when the Lord's ground will be known: I mean, it will now appear who hath received God's Word in their hearts indeed, to the taking of good root therein. For such will not shrink for a little heat or sun-burning weather; but stoutly stand and grow, even maugre the malice of all burning showers and tempests. For he that hath played the wise builder, and laid his foundation on a rock, will not be afraid that every drizzling rain or mist shall hurt his buildings, but will stand, although a great tempest do come, and drops of rain as big as fir-fagots. But they that have builded upon a sand will be afraid, though they see but a cloud arise a little black, and no rain or wind doth once touch them; no, not so

[1] So says Strype, founding upon a marginal note in a MSS., in Emmanuel College, Cambridge, which states that the letter was written "from Bocardo, the 15th day of May, 1555." The *date* may be right, but the *place* is wrong, for it is certain from Ridley's letter to Grindal, that Latimer was not in Bocardo in May, 1555.

much as to lie one week in prison, to trust God with their lives which gave them. For they have forgot what St. Paul saith: 'If we die we are the Lord's: and if we live we are the Lord's: so that whether we live or die we are the Lord's.' Yet they will not put Him in trust with His own.

"And forasmuch, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord, as I am persuaded of you that you be in the number of the wise builders, which have made their foundations sure by faith upon the infallible words of God's truth, and will now bring forth the fruits to God's glory after your vocation, as occasion shall be offered, although the sun burn never so hot, nor the weather be never so foul; wherefore I cannot but signify unto every one of you to go forward accordingly after your Master Christ; not sticking at the foul way and stormy weather which you are come unto, or are like to come: of this being most certain, that the end of your sorrow shall be pleasant and joyful, in such a perpetual rest and blissfulness as cannot but swallow up the storms which you now feel, and are like to feel, at the hands of those sacrificing prelates. . . . Set before you that though the weather be stormy and foul, yet you go not alone; many other of your brethren and sisters pass by the same path, as St. Peter telleth us; that company might cause you to be the more courageous and cheerful. But if you had no company at all to go presently with you, stick not to go still forward. I pray you, tell me, if from the beginning any, yea the best of God's friends, have found any fairer way or weather to the place whither we are going (I mean to heaven) than we now find and are like to find. . . . . Read from the first of Genesis to the Apocalypse, and tell me whether any of the saints in the Old Testament found any fairer ways than we now find, whether any of the apostles and evangelists found any other way unto the city whereunto we travel, than by many tribulations. . . . Wherefore, my dear beloved, be not so dainty to look to have at the Lord's hands, your dear Father, that which the patriarchs, prophets, and evangelists, martyrs, and saints, yea, and His own Son Jesus Christ did not find."

After warning them earnestly of the sin which they who knew and believed "the mass to be an abominable idol, full of idolatry, blasphemy, sacrilege against God and the dear sacrifice of His Christ," would incur if they sanctioned by their presence this "pernicious blasphemy against the

death of their Redeemer;" and faithfully exposing the dishonest practice of going to mass, but at the same time sitting in their pews instead of kneeling at the elevation, as if they could thereby serve two masters, he thus concludes his farewell letter:—

"Pray for me, your poor brother and fellow-sufferer for God's sake; His name therefore be praised. And let us pray to God that He of His mercy will vouchsafe to make both you and me meet to suffer with good consciences for His name's sake. Die once we must; how and where we know not. Happy are they whom God giveth to pay nature's debt (I mean to die) for His sake. Here is not our home; let us therefore accordingly consider things, having always before our eyes that heavenly Jerusalem, and the way thereunto in persecution. And let us consider all the dear friends of God, how they have gone after the example of our Saviour Jesus Christ; whose footsteps let us also follow, even to the gallows (if God's will be so), not doubting but as He rose again the third day, even so shall we do at the time appointed of God, that is, when the trump shall blow, and the angel shall shout, and the Son of Man shall appear in the clouds, with innumerable saints and angels, in His majesty and great glory, and the dead shall arise, and we shall be caught up into the clouds, to meet the Lord, and to be always with Him. Comfort yourselves with these words, and pray for me for the Lord's sake; and God be merciful unto us all. Amen. HUGH L."

These were not the mere conventional common-places of religious consolation, uttered, as they often are, without any earnest belief in them, by men who are at their ease; they were the truths on which Latimer reposed for strength to face every danger, from which he derived peace and comfort, even with the prospect of the stake now drawing near.

In June a new honour was conferred upon Latimer: his books, along with those of Cranmer, Luther, Tyndale, and others, were condemned by royal proclamation, as containing "false doctrine contrary to the catholic faith and the catholic Church;" and all who possessed them were ordered

to deliver them up to be burned. The examinations then going on had shown the authorities that it was vain to silence the voices of the living teachers, if their works were freely circulated throughout the country. The bishops were constantly opposed with citations from "Latimer's books," Cranmer's, Ridley's, and Bradford's; and they hoped, as they had hoped before in the case of the English Bible, to extirpate the hated works by the strong hand of royal authority.

It has never been satisfactorily explained why the Government of Mary allowed so long an interval to elapse between the trial and condemnation of Ridley and Latimer and their martyrdom. For some months, indeed, after the famous disputation of April, 1554, their execution would have been irregular and illegal; but even after Parliament had armed the bishops with plenary authority, and the Papal See had given its full sanction to the punishment of heretics, seven months were allowed to pass before any steps were taken to enforce the sentence against them. Perhaps there was some division of opinion among the chief authorities of the State; perhaps it was felt to be necessary to advance with caution against victims so distinguished and so highly esteemed; perhaps it was hoped that by long imprisonment their spirits might be depressed and they might be induced to recant (and Bonner always declared in his coarse, vulgar way, that Cranmer was sure to recant). Whatever may have occasioned the delay, it was at length determined, in the month of September, to proceed to the conclusion of their case. On September 28 Cardinal Pole sent to Oxford three Commissioners, White, Bishop of Lincoln, Brooks, Bishop of Gloucester, and Holyman, Bishop of Bristol, with full power to summon before them Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, "pretensed

Bishops of Worcester and London," and to examine them on sundry heresies which they had maintained in the disputation of the previous year, as well as during (what the Cardinal was pleased to call) "the time of perdition," that is, the period during which the Reformation had been established in England. The Commissioners were empowered to receive the two heretics into the "reconciliation of the Holy Father," if they should prove penitent and yield to the determination of the Catholic Church; but if they proved obstinate and adhered to their opinions, they were to be condemned, excommunicated, degraded, and handed over to the secular power for due punishment.

The Articles offered to them, to be received or rejected at the risk of their lives, were the same as those of the previous disputation; and the two bishops were examined separately. Ridley was first placed at the bar, and during his trial Latimer was kept waiting outside. Ridley's trial over, Latimer was summoned before the Commissioners. Tradition has preserved, in the pages of Foxe, a sort of Dutch picture or photograph of the aged Reformer's appearance as he presented himself before his judges. "He held his hat in his hand; he had a kerchief on his head, and upon it a night-cap or two, and a great cap, such as townsmen use, with two broad flaps to button under the chin" [not the square cap which was so hateful to Foxe's eyes]; "he wore an old threadbare frieze gown girded to his body with a penny leather girdle, at the which hanged by a long string of leather his Testament; and his spectacles, without case, depended about his neck upon his breast." Clearly this was not one of those who wore soft clothing, but an unkempt prophet like John the Baptist or Elias.

The Bishop of Lincoln, who acted as chief of the commission, addressed Latimer, urging him to return "like a

strayed sheep to the unity of Christ's Church," from which he had fallen in the time of schism. "It is to no new place," he continued, "I exhort you to return, but to return thither from whence you went. Consider, Master Latimer, that *without* the unity of the Church is no salvation, and *in* the Church can be no errors. Therefore what should stay you to confess that which all the realm confesseth, to forsake that which the King and Queen their majesties have renounced, and all the realm recanted." After briefly alluding to the usual Romish argument for the supremacy of the Papal See, founded upon our Lord's words to St. Peter, "Feed my sheep," the Bishop went on to warn Latimer of the consequences of adhering to his opinions, and concluded with an appeal that would have overcome any one whose constancy was not founded on the truth.

"Master Latimer, for God's love consider your estate" [position]: "remember you are a learned man; you have taken degrees in the school, borne the office of a bishop; remember you are an old man; spare your body; accelerate not your death; and specially remember your soul's health, quiet of your conscience. Consider, that if you should die in this state, you shall be a stinking sacrifice to God; for it is the cause that maketh the martyr, and not the death; consider, that if you die in this state, you die without grace; for without the Church can be no salvation. Let not vain glory have the upper hand; humiliate yourself; captivate your understanding; subdue your reason; submit yourself to the determination of the Church; do not force us to do all that we may do; let us rest in that part which we most heartily desire, and I for my part again with all my heart exhort you."

Having received permission to reply, Latimer, in a few words, refuted the argument that had been addressed to him.

"Your lordship gently exhorted me in many words to come to the unity of the Church. I confess, my lord, a Catholic Church, spread

through all the world, *in* the which no man may err, *without* the which unity of the Church no man can be saved; but I know perfectly by God's Word, that this Church is in all the world, and hath not his foundation in Rome only, as you say. And methought your lordship brought a place out of the Scriptures to confirm the same, that there was a jurisdiction given to Peter, in that Christ bade him *regere*, govern His people. Indeed, my lord, St. Peter did well and truly his office, in that he was bid *regere;* but since, the bishops of Rome have taken a new kind of *regere.* Indeed they ought *regere*, but how, my lord? Not as they will themselves, but this *regere* must be hedged in and ditched in. They must *regere*, but *secundum verbum Dei*, according to the Word of God. But the bishops of Rome have turned 'ruling according to the Word of God' into 'ruling according to their own pleasures.'"

He proceeded to illustrate this by reference to a book published in the end of 1553, in which the writer, the Bishop of Gloucester, who was then present, arguing from the words of Deuteronomy, "If there ariseth any controversy among the people, the priests of the order of Levi shall decide the matter according to the law of God," had omitted entirely the important words "according to the law of God." His allusion excited a smile among the audience, for Latimer had added that, to his knowledge, he had never seen the writer of the book, though the writer was one of the three Commissioners before whom he was then speaking. This preliminary and informal discussion over, the Articles were read aloud, and Latimer was required to admit or deny each as briefly as possible. Latimer protested that the fact of his answering should not be construed as a recognition of the Pope's authority in England, and then plainly and concisely answered to his Articles.

"'We object to thee, Hugh Latimer,' so ran the Articles, 'first, that thou, in this high university of Oxford, anno 1554, in the month of April, hast affirmed and openly defended and maintained that the true and natural body of Christ, after the consecration of the priest,

is not really present in the sacrament of the altar. What say you unto this? I pray you answer affirmatively or negatively.'

"'I do not deny, my lord,' Latimer replied, 'that in the sacrament, by spirit and grace, is the very body and blood of Christ; because that every man, by receiving bodily that bread and wine, spiritually receiveth the body and blood of Christ, and is made partaker thereby of the merits of Christ's passion. But I deny that the body and blood of Christ is in such sort in the sacrament as you would have it.'"

This the Bishop directed the notary to record as an affirmative answer, and proceeded to the second article.

"'*Item.* That thou hast publicly affirmed that in the sacrament of the altar remaineth still the substance of bread and wine. What say you to this Article?

"*Latimer.*—'There is, my lord, a change in the bread and wine, and such a change as no power but the omnipotency of God can make, in that that which before was bread should now have the dignity to exhibit Christ's body; and yet the bread is still bread, and the wine still wine. For the change is not in the nature, but in the dignity; because now that which was common bread hath the dignity to exhibit Christ's body: for whereas it was common bread, it is now no more common bread, neither ought it to be so taken, but as holy bread sanctified by God's Word.'

"*Lincoln.*—'Well, Master Latimer, is not this your answer, that the substance of bread and wine remaineth after the words of consecration?'

"*Latimer.*—'Yes, verily: it must needs be so, for Christ Himself calleth it bread; St. Paul calleth it bread; the doctors confess the same; the nature of a sacrament confirmeth the same; and I call it holy bread, not in that I make no difference betwixt your holy bread and this, but for the holy office which it beareth, that is, to be a figure of Christ's body; and not only a bare figure, but effectually to represent the same.'"

This was likewise entered as an affirmative answer, and the third Article was read.

"'*Item.* That you openly affirmed that in the mass is no propitiatory sacrifice for the quick and the dead.'

"*Latimer.*—'No, no, my lord: Christ made one perfect sacrifice

for all the whole world; neither can any man offer Him again, neither can the priest offer up Christ again for the sins of men, which He took away by offering Himself once for all, as St. Paul saith, upon the cross; neither is there any propitiation for our sins, saving His cross only.'"

This also was noted down as an affirmative answer. The fourth Article declared that these foregoing assertions of Latimer's had been condemned as heretical by Doctor Weston and other learned men. To this Latimer at first made no reply, and the Bishop asked whether he had heard what was read or not.

"*Latimer.*—'Yes, but I do not understand what you mean thereby.'

"*Lincoln.*—'Marry, only this, that your assertions were condemned by Dr. Weston as heresies. Is it not so, Master Latimer?'

"*Latimer.*—'Yes, I think they are condemned; but how unjustly, He that shall be judge of all knoweth.'"

This also being taken for an affirmative answer, the last Article was recited, which asserted in the usual manner that "all the premises were true and openly known by public fame, as well to them near hand, as to them in distant places far off." To this Latimer could only reply that in his seclusion he could not tell what men thought or said, and indeed he neither knew nor cared what men reported of him.

The answers being thus explicitly given, the Commissioners might at once have proceeded to pronounce sentence; but they intimated to Latimer that they would grant him a respite till the next day, in the hope that after he had seriously pondered every thing, he might acknowledge his errors and recant. Latimer entreated permission to explain his reasons for rejecting the Pope's authority, but it was declined.

"'To-morrow,' said Lincoln, 'you shall have licence.'

"'Nay my lords,' he rejoined, 'I beseech you to do with me *now*

as it shall please your lordships; I pray you let me not be troubled to-morrow again.'

"'Yes, Master Latimer,' answered Lincoln, 'you must needs appear again to-morrow.'

"'Truly, my lord, as for my part I require no respite, for I am at a point' [my mind is made up]: 'you shall give me respite in vain, therefore I pray you let me not trouble you to-morrow.'

"'Yes,' added Lincoln, 'for we trust God will work with you against to-morrow. There is no remedy; you must needs appear again to-morrow, at eight of the clock, in St. Mary's Church.'"

And so "about one of the clock at afternoon" that day's discussion ended, and Latimer, consigned to his old prison again, was left to prepare himself by meditation and prayer for the final appearance which, he knew well, should decide his fate.

Next morning the Commissioners repaired at the appointed hour to St. Mary's Church, and seated themselves in state on their "high throne, well trimmed with cloth of tissue and silk." It was the session-day, October 1, and many of the gentlemen of the county were present, and the whole of Oxford, town and gown, were assembled in eager crowds to behold the conclusion of the great trial. Ridley was first called in, and was after some debate condemned, and consigned to the mayor for execution. Then Latimer was sent for, "but in the mean season," says Foxe, "the carpet or cloth, which lay upon the table whereat Master Ridley stood, was removed, because (as men reported) Master Latimer had never the degree of a doctor, as Master Ridley had;" a wretched piece of academical vindictiveness, which seems to have been quite uncalled for, as Latimer had been recognised as doctor in scores of public official documents.[1] Placing his old felt

[1] There is, as already mentioned, no record in Cambridge of Latimer's receiving the degree, yet he would not have been styled Doctor in official documents without warrant.

hat under his elbows, the old Reformer, when he entered, complained of the carelessness which had left him, an "old man, with a very evil back," exposed so long to the somewhat rude pressing of the eager multitude. The Bishop of Lincoln promised that better order should be taken at his departure; and then once more entreated him to revoke his errors and to return to the Catholic Church.

Latimer interrupted him, "Your lordship doth often repeat the Catholic Church, as though I should deny the same. No, my lord, I confess there is a Catholic Church, to the determination of which I will stand; but not the Church which you call catholic, which sooner might be termed diabolic. And whereas you join together the Romish and Catholic Church, stay there, I pray you. For it is one thing to say Romish Church, and another thing to say Catholic Church."

The articles which Latimer had answered the previous day were then once more read over one by one, that he might have one final opportunity of escape afforded him. He answered them, however, as he had done before, adhering firmly to his belief that Christ's body and blood were not in the sacrament under the forms of bread and wine "after that corporal being" [manner] "which the Church of Rome prescribeth;" and that "there neither needeth nor can there be any other propitiatory sacrifice than that one oblation and sacrifice for the sins of the whole world which Christ has offered."

This business briefly dismissed, and Latimer having plainly refused to acknowledge that his teaching on these points was heretical and contrary to God's Word, the Bishop of Lincoln proceeded to read the sentence of condemnation, as he had already read it over Ridley.

The words are well worth weighing by those who doubt

what was the doctrinal belief of the framers of the Articles of the English Church :—

"Forasmuch as the said Hugh Latimer did affirm, maintain, and stubbornly defend certain opinions, assertions, and heresies, contrary to the Word of God and the received faith of the Church, as in denying the true and natural body of Christ, and His natural blood to be in the sacrament of the altar; secondly, in affirming the substance of bread and wine to remain after the words of consecration; thirdly, in denying the mass to be a lively sacrifice of the Church for the quick and the dead: therefore the judges did condemn him as a heretic, adjudged him presently to be degraded from all ecclesiastical orders, declared him to be no member of the Church, excommunicated him with the great excommunication, and committed him to the secular powers to receive due punishment."

The sentence read, the bishops broke up the court and dismissed the audience. Latimer in vain reminded them of their promise the day before that he should be permitted to explain his reasons for rejecting the Pope's authority; they refused to grant him a hearing. He then asked if he might not be allowed to appeal from the judgment pronounced against him. "To whom would you appeal?" asked his judge. "To the next general council," quoth Latimer, "which shall be truly called in God's name." Lincoln turned aside with a smile; he had no objection, he said, to such an assembly, but it would be a long time before it would be convoked. Latimer was then consigned to the mayor to be kept till October 16, the day appointed for his martyrdom.

So concluded the last public act of Latimer's long career; like the great Apostle to whom he was so often compared, he had "fought a good fight," he had "finished" his "course," he had "kept the faith," he was "ready to be offered." An interval of a fortnight was still to elapse before the actual execution of the terrible sentence; and

of that calm and holy time of preparation even tradition has preserved no record. It is enough that the eye of an admiring biographer can, in the dim distance, perceive a venerable head now bent in anxious study over the New Testament, now "suddenly lifted up to heaven, after his manner;" and a reverend figure kneeling in earnest supplication for strength to abide the fiery trial that was at hand. One wretched interruption, it is to be feared, would somewhat mar the peace of this blessed season of preparation. He had been sentenced to be degraded from all his ecclesiastical orders; and the traditional mummery with which his degradation was effected, would probably be performed on the evening before his martyrdom, as in the case of his fellow-sufferer Ridley.

On Wednesday, October 16, all Oxford was gathered round the place of execution, "in the ditch over against Balliol College." The Government was apprehensive of some violent attempt to prevent the martyrdom, and precautions had been taken to repel violence by force. When all was ready, the two bishops were led forth from their respective places of confinement in the houses of the mayor and the bailiff. It is needless to endeavour to disentangle the tale of Latimer's martyrdom from that of his companion, with which it is inseparably interwoven. Latimer and Ridley were united in their lives, for years they had been joined in active labour, and associated in imprisonment and misfortune, and we shall not, therefore, divide the story of their deaths. Equally needless would it be to attempt to translate into the language of modern descriptive pathos, the plain unvarnished tale of the old martyrologist. Foxe doubtless heard the sad scene described by Latimer's servant, or some other eye-witness, and his words bring us more really into the position of

spectators than any effort of modern constructive imagination could do.

"Master Ridley had a fair black gown furred, and faced with foins, such as he was wont to wear being bishop, and a tippet of velvet, furred likewise, about his neck; a velvet night-cap upon his head, and a corner cap upon the same, going in a pair of slippers to the stake, between the mayor and an alderman.

"After him came Master Latimer, in a poor Bristol frieze frock, all worn, with his buttoned cap, and a kerchief on his head, all ready to the fire, a new long shroud hanging over his hose down to the feet; which at first sight stirred men's hearts to rue upon them, beholding, on the one side, the honour they sometime had, and on the other, the calamity whereunto they were fallen.

"Master Ridley as he passed towards Bocardo, looked up where Master Cranmer did lie" [pity he did not form one of the victims of the day, his career had then closed without a stain], "hoping belike to have seen him at the glass window, and to have spoken unto him. But then Master Cranmer was busy with friar Soto and his fellows, disputing together, so that he could not see him, through that occasion. Then Master Ridley looking back, espied Master Latimer coming after" [from the bailiff's house], "unto whom he said, 'Oh, be ye there?' 'Yea,' said Master Latimer, 'have after, as fast as I can follow;' so he, following a pretty way off, at length they came both to the stake, the one after the other, where first Dr. Ridley entering the place, marvellous earnestly holding up both his hands, looked towards heaven. Then, shortly after, espying Master Latimer, with a wondrous cheerful look he ran to him, embraced and kissed him; and, as they that stood near reported, comforted him, saying: 'Be of good heart, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flame or else strengthen us to abide it.' With that went he to the stake, kneeled down by it, kissed it, and effectually prayed; and behind him Master Latimer kneeled, as earnestly calling upon God as he. After they arose, the one talked with the other a little while, till they which were appointed to see the execution, removed themselves out of the sun. What they said I can learn of no man."

Then followed a sermon, preached by the wretched pervert Smith, of whom we have heard before, on St. Paul's words, "Though I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." The character

of the harangue, which was fortunately only a quarter of an hour long, may be left to the reader's imagination. The two martyrs asked permission to say a few words to the people, but they were informed that they could only be allowed to speak if they recanted their errors. "Well then," said Ridley, "I commit our cause to Almighty God, which shall indifferently judge all." To which Latimer added his favourite remark, "There is nothing hid, but it shall be revealed."

"Incontinently they were commanded to make them ready, which they with all meekness obeyed. Master Ridley took his gown, and his tippet, and gave it to his brother-in-law, Master Shipside, who all his time of imprisonment, although he might not be suffered to come to him, lay there at his own charges to provide him necessaries, which from time to time he sent him by the serjeant that kept him. Some other of his apparel that was little worth, he gave away; other the bailiffs took. Divers other small things, a new groat, some napkins, nutmegs, vases of ginger, his dial, and such other things as he had about him, gave he to gentlemen standing by. Some plucked the points off his hose. Happy was he that might get any rag of him.

"Master Latimer gave nothing, but very quietly suffered his keeper to pull off his hose, and his other array, which to look unto was very simple: and being stripped into his shroud, he seemed as comely a person to them that were there present, as one should lightly see; and whereas in his clothes he appeared a withered and crooked silly" [*i.e.* infirm] "old man, he now stood bolt upright, as comely a father as one might lightly behold.

"Then Master Ridley, standing as yet in his truss, said to his brother, 'It were best for me to go in my truss still.' 'No,' quoth his brother, 'it will put you to more pain; and the truss will do a poor man good.' Whereunto Master Ridley said, 'Be it. in the name of God,' and so unlaced himself. Then, being in his shirt, he stood upon the stone, and held up his hand and said, 'Oh, heavenly Father, I give unto Thee most hearty thanks, for that Thou hast called me to be a professor of Thee, even unto death. I beseech Thee, Lord God, take mercy upon this realm of England, and deliver the same from all her enemies.'

"Then the smith took a chain of iron, and brought the same about both Dr. Ridley's and Master Latimer's middle, and as he was knocking in a staple, Dr. Ridley took the chain in his hand, and shaked the same, for it did gird in his belly, and looking aside to the smith, said, 'Good fellow, knock it in hard, for the flesh will have his course.' Then his brother did bring him gunpowder in a bag, and would have tied the same about his neck. Master Ridley asked what it was. 'Gunpowder,' his brother said. 'Then,' said he, 'I will take it to be sent of God, therefore I will receive it as sent of Him. And have you any,' said he, 'for my brother?' meaning Master Latimer. 'Yea, sir, that I have,' quoth his brother. 'Then give it unto him,' said he, 'betime, lest ye come too late.' So his brother went and carried of the same gunpowder unto Master Latimer.

"Then they brought a faggot, kindled with fire, and laid the same down at Dr. Ridley's feet. To whom Master Latimer spake in this manner: 'Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. WE SHALL THIS DAY LIGHT SUCH A CANDLE, BY GOD'S GRACE, IN ENGLAND, AS I TRUST SHALL NEVER BE PUT OUT.' And so the fire being given unto them, when Dr. Ridley saw the fire flaming up towards him, he cried, with a wonderful loud voice, '*In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum. Domine, recipe spiritum meum*;' and after, repeated this latter part often in English, 'Lord, Lord, receive my spirit:' Master Latimer crying as vehemently on the other side, 'O Father of heaven, receive my soul!' who received the flame as it were embracing of it. After that he had stroked his face with his hands, and as it were bathed them a little in the fire, he soon died (as it appeared), with very little pain or none.

"And thus much concerning this old and blessed servant of God, Master Latimer, for whose laborious travails, fruitful life, and constant death, the whole realm hath cause to give great thanks to Almighty God."

Ridley lingered for some time in excruciating pain, the fire being choked and burning fiercely beneath, while it could not reach any of the vital parts. At last the flame rose and exploded the gunpowder, and his lifeless body fell over the chain at Latimer's feet.

The bystanders remarked that while Latimer's charred

remains lay among the embers, a great quantity of blood issued from his heart; and his friends saw in this a strange fulfilment of his prayer that God, who had called him to be a preacher of the Word, would strengthen him to shed his heart's blood in its defence.

Altogether the scene is one whose horrors a modern reader cannot fully conceive, and one reads with a feeling of amazement, the following "Bill of charges for burning Ridley and Latimer," made out in cold blood, as if it were a common-place business transaction.

	s.	d.
"For three loads of wood faggots to burn Ridley and Latimer	12	0
Item, one load of furze faggots	3	4
For the carriage of these four loads... ...	2	0
Item, a post...	1	4
Item, two chains...	3	4
Item, two staples...	0	6
Item, four labourers	2	8
	25	2"

So that it appears to have cost the Government of Mary one pound five shillings and twopence to burn the two martyrs; such was the money value of the transaction, but the real price paid was the overthrow of the Romish religion in England. The candle lit that day has never been put out. The honest life known and admired of all England, closing appropriately in a constant death, proved too much for the policy of Gardiner and the power of Spain. The nation was awakened to the greatness of the crisis: the doctrines which Latimer had taught and for which he had died were more sincerely cherished; the blood of the martyrs again became the seed of the Church; and the Reformation, which seemed on the point of being ruined

by the violence of its enemies, and the careless lives of many who professed to be its friends, was again firmly established by the fearless deaths of Ridley and Latimer, and the other brave martyrs whom their example animated to stedfastness.

Five months later, Cranmer, after many exhibitions of weakness, stood on the same spot where his dear friends and fellow-prisoners had glorified God in the fire, and knelt in prayer to God, and, doubtless, felt his courage revived by the recollection of their firm faith.

For many years strangers at Oxford were shown, in front of Balliol College, a stone, said to be the very stone on which the martyrs stood when they were burnt; and the memory of their constancy was cherished as the noblest tradition of the place. Now a graceful monument commemorates the faithfulness unto death of the three "Oxford Martyrs," and proclaims that three centuries have not weakened the love of the English nation for the good and brave men who died for the religious liberty of their country. Long may their names be held in reverence by the Church, and by the people of England! Long may the religious teachers of the nation admire and imitate the faith, the honesty, the learning, the gentleness, the large-hearted charity of the three illustrious martyrs, to whom, under God, we are chiefly indebted for the countless blessings of a purified religion—the true source of our national greatness!

Little need be added by way of illustrating the character of Latimer. His was one of those simple natures which no one can fail to read, and about which there is, consequently, a universal agreement among all historians. Plain, honest, outspoken, warm-hearted, possessing a generous hand, a practical mind, a shrewd humour, an

unaffected piety, he was the very type of man that the English nation has always best understood and most highly appreciated. This simplicity constituted the strength of his character; he was a straightforward, upright man, who meant what he said, and practised what he taught; one who never sunk the man in the mere theological polemic, in whose eyes sin was always worse than error, and a pure life of more importance than a mere orthodox creed. This love of practical religion it was Latimer's mission to infuse into the English Reformation. So far as that movement was a return to the primitive teaching of Holy Scripture and the earliest times, he must be considered as occupying a subordinate place in it; but so far as it was an attempt to revive that true model of holy living, of which Christ is the great example, Latimer was its ablest and most conspicuous leader.

Of his personal character his biographer may, without exaggeration, speak in the highest terms. Froude has even asserted that Latimer was "the one man in England whose conduct was, perhaps, absolutely straightforward, upright, and untainted with alloy of baser matter." The praise may seem extravagant; yet it is certain, that though Latimer lived in troublous times, when men's passions were fiercely excited, and the tongue of slander spared neither age, nor rank, nor profession, yet his character has come down to us almost without a stain. No serious imputation has ever been advanced against his personal integrity; it has never been insinuated that he was a mere political tool; it has never been asserted that his conduct was actuated by other than honest motives. The few petty charges occasionally alleged against him may be accepted as implying a tacit admission that no graver faults could be discovered in his character, and are in

themselves so trifling as to be beneath criticism. No one, for example, can be expected seriously to refute the accusation of a contemporary enemy who declared that "he was ill-favoured, and had teeth like a horse;" and the disparaging remarks of some modern critics, who represent him as coarse and vulgar, have no greater foundation in truth. Of all the English Reformers, Latimer is the only one whose works still retain any measure of popularity. They have been frequently reprinted, and, in spite of the manifold disadvantages of antiquity and strange phraseology, they have always found readers, not among the small body of theological antiquarians merely, but among the general class of intelligent Englishmen. His fame is still on the increase; and the more his works are read, the more the story of his life is known, the more the history of the period is studied, so much the higher, it may confidently be predicted, will Latimer stand in the estimation of his countrymen. "The memory of the just," says the wise man, "is blessed;" it is the richest inheritance which one generation can transmit to another—the glory and strength of a nation. England can boast of many illustrious names, patriots, scholars, warriors, whose achievements have increased her fame and wealth, or have promoted her political and intellectual progress, and she owes them a debt of gratitude for the benefits they have conferred upon her; but a far deeper gratitude, surely, is due to the teachers, whose unwearied labours overthrew the system of spiritual corruption that had so long held the nation in the bondage of ignorance and superstition, to the pious men whose perseverance secured for their countrymen a free Bible and a pure worship, to the martyrs who perished at the stake in noble testimony that the truth of God is dearer than life. Among that illustrious band of English preachers and martyrs, a very high, if not the

highest place, may be claimed for Latimer; and not till England has lost her veneration for simple, honest piety, and ceases to be a Bible-loving nation, will she cease to love and reverence the good old bishop whom Ridley so justly recognised as the "true apostle of the English nation."

"How fast the Marian death-list is unrolled!
See Latimer and Ridley, in the might
Of Faith, stand coupled for a common flight!
One, like those prophets whom God sent of old,
Transfigured, from this kindling hath foretold
A torch of inextinguishable light;
The other gains a confidence as bold;
And thus they foil their enemy's despite.
The penal instruments, the shows of crime,
Are glorified while this once-mitred pair
Of saintly friends, the murtherous chain partake,
Corded, and burning at the social stake:
Earth never witnessed object more sublime
In constancy, in fellowship more fair!"—WORDSWORTH.

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